Table of Contents

1. WAIT! BEFORE YOU START!
2. Worries
3. A free bird
4. Reminders of his past
5. Arrival to the air-field
6. Return to hell
7. Horror
8. Oh Germany...what have you done?
9. Dilemma
10. Forgive
11. Explanations
12. Curiosity killed* me
13. Questioning
14. Awake and alive
15. The start of the aftermath
16. Confrontation
17. Late night talks
18. Sickness
19. Obudzony
20. I trust you
21. Ice breaker
22. 1K READS Q&A SPECIAL
23. Jealousy, Jealously
24. Repairing a fractured mind
25. Healed
26. Taking the first step
27. A Singaporean's Diary
28. Meltdown
29. Back after a break
30. Combat Class
31. Trouble is brewing (1)
32. Incorrect quotes and alignment charts about BbD characters
33. Trouble is brewing (2)
34. Art Class

35. Realisations
36. Fall
37. Awakening
38. Let me go
39. Supporter
40. With me
41. Escape
42. Eye of Horus
43. Can I Trust You?
44. Murderer
45. Recollection
46. Confession
47. Understanding
48. I wish I could forget
49. Arrested
50. Christmas Special
51. Imprisoned
52. Restart
53. 10K Q&A!!!
54. Change of heart
55. Семья (Family)
56. Exit
57. The Downfall
58. Sacrifices and Survival
59. Count on me
60. Trust

WAIT! BEFORE YOU START!

Hello dear reader, before we get started, I would like to set out some warnings and disclaimers.

1) I do not affliate to any of the countries or organisations in this story.

2) There are references to WW2 but it may not be entirely historically accurate. I suggest reading up more about the referenced events if you are curious.

3) I don't wish to romanticize any of the countries in this book or the horrible things they have done. However, some stereotypes may appear in the book.

4) Please don't start a war in the comments--especially if it's about country relations. If so, I will take down the book. My book is not a place for fighting.

5) I only know Chinese and some Indonesian (VERY LIMITED) so translated sentences are done by Google Translate.

6) There is profanity.

7) There is gore and blood.

8) The only mentioned ship is Britian x France. NO OTHER SHIPS!

+ + + +

RICH!!! Nah, jkjk, I'm happy with being just a regular citizen. Just don't increase taxes.), I own the story and I **do not** allow **translations** or **reposts on other websites**. Once again, if you see this story eleswhere, please inform me.

I will update every week if I can.

Flags on top of the chapter indicate the point of view.

+ + + +

Worries

[image]

I sighed as I observed the servant packing the last of my clothes into the luggage. He turned around, eyebrows raised. "Did I miss something Prince Germany?" he inquired politely. I shook my head quickly as I answered, "No Berlin, nothing. Thank you for your help." He nodded and turned to close the lid. I sighed again as two other servants hurried in to take the luggage away. Berlin turned to face me, frowning. "Are you okay Prince Germany? You have been sighing quite a bit lately. Is there something bothering you?" he asked before hurriedly adding, "I...I didn't mean to pry! It's just...it's you looked so worried and–"

I raised my hand to stop him as I let out a chuckle. "Calm down Berlin, I'm not going to get mad. Thank you for your concern. I guess the starting school year is stressing me out a bit. I'll be fine though!" I hurriedly added the last bit, forcing a smile onto my face. Berlin smiled sympathetically as he patted my back. "All will go well Prince, perhaps this year you'll make a friend!" he added brightly. I winced but forced myself to nod along, "Yea, maybe I'll make friends." *Friends? Ha, who would want to be my friend after what Vater did? He basically massacred thousands of people! Friends, pffft, more like enemies.* Berlin chuckled as he gave me another pat on the back. Bowing, he soon headed out of my room to complete his other duties. I sank back into my bed as soon as he left and I found myself worrying about school all over again.

Some things are bound to go wrong. I don't think I'm ready to socialise with others again. What if I mess up? Oh god, what if I meet ***him*** *on the first day?*

It was going to be my 7th year at Pangea Preparatory Academy, a school for all the royals and those rich enough to afford the highly expensive school fees. I had been going there since I was 12 and I absolutely hated it there. Not because I didn't like school but because I didn't have friends. Not that many wanted to be after

what my father had done during the war. Especially the Prince of Light, Poland. During the war, my father had harmed him and his father very seriously causing both of them to lose their wings and Poland's father lost one eye. Poland never forgave me after that saying that I was a monster despite the thousands of apologies our kingdom had issued to them and the hundreds of dinners we held with them. It didn't matter that we had "relations" (a rather poor one that is), the truth was that the Kingdom of Light still detested the Kingdom of Darkness and their citizens definitely weren't shy about letting ours know about that. Especially Poland. Especially him.

I sighed again as I fiddled with the cuff of a long-sleeved shirt. Truthfully, the only person who had ever been close enough to being my friend was Russia, the Knyaz of Winter. He and I became friends when our fathers decided to become allies and fight in the war. But that alliance soon broke off when Vater backstabbed Russia's father. Our relationship with the Kingdom of Winter became frosty as Vater began to attack them. Russia and I however decided to continue being friends. Why should we let our parents decide who we become friends with? But ever since we had a huge heated argument over his treatment of his sibling, Ukraine, our once already fragile friendship shattered. I would never forget the words he hissed to me in the final moments before the teachers came. "You're a monster too *Germaniya*, don't be a f**king hypocrite." Perhaps his words rang with some truth. Maybe I *was* a monster. Or a coward in Poland's case.

I really need to stop thinking about this, I groaned rubbing my forehead. Getting up from the bed, I plodded to my desk and turned on the lamp. The light flickered weakly before it illuminated my desk. Hauling a thick book from my bookshelf, I quickly flipped to where I had last stopped. My eyes roved the page, drinking in the words and schematics printed onto the delicate material. As I read, my hand scribbled down notes and ideas of inventions. *Maybe I could get one of the citizens to help me build them.* Heh, if I wasn't destined to be the heir for the throne, I might have just decided to pursue a path in inventing things. Perhaps help to forward and improve people's lives. But Oma always tutted at my decision. "Getting soaked in motor oil? How un-royal like," she told me many

years ago when I showed her my "invention" (It was a miniature guillotine used to cut veggies. Our chef *was not* happy with how it looked.) Ever since then, I never really touched another tool and focused my time on reading up on engineering. If I wasn't allowed to invent, I could at least give ideas and hope that someone could bring it alive for me.

*

Knock knock! "Come in!" I hollered. "Prince Germany, dinner is ready. Please come down to the dining hall. Her Majesty, Kaiserin Prussia is already there." a servant told me. I closed the book before turning off the light. I followed the servant through the dim hallways to the ornately decorated dining hall. Oma (German for 'Grandmother') was sitting at the head of the table. Scrolls of papers surrounded her as she scribbled on some of them. The servant bowed as she greeted Oma, "Prince Germany is here Your Majesty."

"Thank you Munich, you may leave," Oma said without sparing as much as a glance at Munich. Munich bowed before hurrying away. Absent mindly patting the seat next to her left, Oma signalled to me to take a seat. I nodded slightly and took my seat. The food was soon served and we began eating. She kept on doing her work. I was glad Oma was distracted lest she starts her–

"So Deutschland, are you ready for this school year?" ...questions. I sighed internally. *I jinxed it didn't I,* I scowled though I made sure to keep my facial expression neutral. "Yep! I have all my items," I chirped, forcing a smile on my face. Oma narrowed her eyes but shrugged, "Well enjoy your last free year before you're swamped with examinations after this year. Maybe make a friend as well? It would be nice wouldn't it?" I nodded, smiling wider as my left eye twitched.. *Please stop talking about this. It irritates me very much.* Maybe she noticed my annoyance because she soon returned back to her work. Sighing, I quickly finished my food before leaving the dining room. Oma barely said anything. I guess she's really busy. Good for me, less nagging.

Trudging to my room, I found Berlin waiting for me. "I have prepared your bath Prince Germany," he announced. I thanked him as I entered the bathroom. He did not come in until I was in the

bathtub filled with soapy bubbles. As soon as I called out that I was ready, he came in carrying a basket full of soap bottles. As he got to work, I watched the bubbles on the surface of the water float about idly. Memories flowed back to me. When I was very young, I loved playing with the bubbles in the tub. Blowing out bubbles and watching them float about before they suddenly popped. It always irritated Oma when I was younger because I spent a lot of time in the bath. By the time I came out of the bath, I was as wrinkled as she was. Berlin was often reprimanded for indulging me in this. Despite that, he still let me play about. I smiled fondly at the memory.

"Prince Germany, I'm done. Call me when you have changed?" Berlin stood up from his crouched position. I nodded and waited for him to leave before I hopped out of the bath to dry myself. Changing into a simple shirt and pair of pants, I called for Berlin. He came back in and was carrying a comb in his hand. Instructing me to sit on the stool, he began to comb my hair backwards. "There, done," he smiled proudly at his handwork. I thanked him and he bowed before leaving the bathroom. I quickly brushed my teeth before hurrying out of the bathroom. Moonlight streamed in from the large window in my room. From there, I could see a few guards patrolling the castle grounds. A large wall separated the castle from the outside world. Beyond that was a dirt path that would lead us to the nearest town. From there, you could take a train to the capital. The capital was where many of the richer citizens lived. I had only ever gone there 4 times in my life. Once for my debut to the public where Vater announced that we were going to war. The second was when Oma became the Kaiserin and announced Vater's death. The third time was when she announced the end of the war. And the last time was when it was announced that I was going to Pangea Preparatory Academy. That was...8 years ago. How time flew.

Contrary to what many of the students believed, I rarely went out of the castle during my time back home. I much rather not socialise. Having 41 weeks of socialisation at school was more than enough for me. And it was already going to start up again in a few days' time. I ran a hand through my hair messing up Berlin's work. I wished I didn't have to go to Pangea Preparatory Academy. I wished I didn't have to face Poland. I wish...I wish...I...*I wish I had a friend...*

Having no one around me except for Oma and Berlin, I led a rather lonely life. Yes, the few people who talked to me, Neko Japan and Italy to be precise, could be considered friends of mine but we were more of acquaintances who met due to our parents' role in the war. The enemies who fought against the heroes.

A streak of silver outside my window caught my attention. Looking out, I realised that there were shooting stars falling from the sky. *Did you know that wishing on a shooting star is said to make your wish come true?* Oma's words rang through my head. I was 6 when she told me that. Back then I believed her and would wish on the shooting stars whenever I saw them. But my wishes never came through. Soon, I stopped. *It can't hurt to try though, right?* I clasped my hands together as I watched the stars fly past me. "I wish for a friend," I murmured under my breath. As I said this, I watched the last shooting star fall into the forested area near the castle. Suddenly, I felt very silly. What was I 6? I knew better than to believe in this. *These wishes never come true anyways. It's a waste of my time wishing for these unreachable things.* Scoffing, I jumped into my bed as I pulled the covers over me. Grabbing the book from my bedside table, I turned on the lamp which illuminated the room in a soft glow. I opened the book and began reading it. However the words seemed to keep jumping off the page. After a few more minutes, I gave up and slammed the book back down onto the table in frustration. I laid down on my bed and turned off the lamp. Darkness enveloped the room and I laid there, silent, waiting for Hypnos to take me away to the land of dreams.

A/N: Haha, Merry Christmas. I just couldn't help but post the very first chapter for Bounded by Destiny. Sigh...forget the fact I said I'd post it next year. Ren *still* doesn't have a chapter yet because I don't know how to continue. So I'll just vomit all that I can for this book before returning back to Ren.

A free bird

[image]

"Hey! Watch it!" a vendor yelled at me as I dashed through the crowded market. Citizens jumped out of the way, yelping, as I dashed past them. Many cursed at me. Behind my hood which obscured my identity, a small smirk lifted the corner of my mouth. I could hear them once again cursing as I heard the sound of heavy boots against the cobblestone street. "OUT OF THE WAY PLEASE!" a man roared. I turned to look behind me, noting that my pursuer was catching up. I ran faster. Skidding round the corner I soon entered a narrow alleyway. Leaning against the damp wall, I tried to catch my breath. When I was sure the coast was clear, I took off the hood. Finally I could see the world unobscured. Just then, I felt a large hand clamp down on my shoulder. I spun about to face Warsaw, the Head of the Royal Guards. He was glowering at me. "You are in *big* trouble Prince," he growled. I smirked as I swiftly twisted out of his iron grip. "You're going to have to catch me first!" I dashed out of the alleyway only to be stopped by two other soldiers. They grabbed my arms and lifted me off the ground. I kicked about like a fish caught in a net but to no avail. Warsaw stomped out of the alleyway, smirking as he wagged his finger.

"Take him back to the palace. We shall let His Majesty deal with this," he instructed the soldiers who nodded. I glared at Warsaw who only chuckled. He placed the hood on my head before instructing the soldiers to bring me back to the carriage. The soldiers set me back onto the ground although they kept their iron grip on my shoulder. Not too tight to leave a mark but enough to make sure that I couldn't run off again. Then they walked me to the carriage. After I begrudgingly got in, they took their seats next to me. After hollering to the driver to go, the carriage jerked. I wasn't prepared and would have nearly fallen on my face if one soldier hadn't caught me. I thanked him and he nodded. As the carriage moved, I turned around to face the back window. The capital slowly vanished from my sight and I slumped in my seat. I was not looking forward to heading back.

*

"Prince Poland, Your Majesty," a servant bowed in front of my father, King Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (King Pol for short). He nodded and thanked her. Turning to face me, he motioned for me to come up to his throne. I dragged my foot as I climbed up the steps up to the throne. Papa looked at me with an amused look. "How was your adventure Polska? Fun I presume?" he asked me. I made a face but nodded. "If only Warsaw didn't catch me then it would have been more fun..." I whined. Papa chuckled as he patted my head. "He cares about you. Besides, tomorrow you'll be heading back to school. Surely you wouldn't want to get yourself injured in the crowd." I grumbled under my breath about stupid rules. Papa shook his head as he shooed me away. "I have to meet Warsaw. We need to talk about another meeting with the Kingdom of Darkness," he sighed. I grimaced. The Kingdom of Darkness was our enemy, nothing coming from that kingdom was ever good. Their stupid king was the one who cost me and Papa's wings along with his eye. I was happy he was dead and gone. But I didn't like his offspring. His name was Germany and he attended the same school as I did. The worst part was that he was in the same year as me. I went out of my way to make sure I hardly met him. I was sure he did the same thing. *What does that kingdom want from us now? For us to say we forgive them? As if. Ugh, I have to meet that stupid prince soon. How tiresome.* I frowned heavily. *I shouldn't let this affect my mood. No, that means Darkness wins. Bah, as if I would.* Wanting to cheer myself up, I decided to go and find my pet.

"BALINT! Yoo-hoo! Come out! I have treats!!!" I called out holding a big paper bag filled with some excess chicken meat. A minute later, I heard the flapping of wings as a bird snatched the bag out of my hands. "Woah, slow down Balint, no one's going to steal your food," I laughed sitting down on the grass as I watched my white-tailed eagle eagerly (haha, get it? Eagle and eagerly?) tear the bag open as he ate the chicken strips I had packed. I smiled and patted his head. Balint was my pet and he and I were extremely close. I found him injured in the forest with an arrow that had impaled his wing. Feeling sorry for him, I brought him back where he was treated. The royal vet said that he might not fly again and I couldn't help but feel sorry for it. After all, I knew the pain of never touching the

sky ever again. And in the first few months, he truly couldn't. Balint became depressed and I knew it was my job to cheer him up. Every day, I would bring him up to the bell tower in the capital, the highest point around to view the sky. Then, one day, Balint lost his grip on my arm. He tumbled down, down, down. I thought he was dead. No one could survive that fall. But to my delight and surprise, he soared upwards landing back on my arm. That earned him his name, Balint. It meant 'strong' and 'healthy'. A fitting name. And in the months he spent with me, he became inseparable from me. When we tried to release him back into the wild, he chose to stay. So he became my pet.

"Do you want to try that new trick we've been working on?" I asked Balint. He let out a cry of approval and I got to my feet. Closing my eyes, I concentrated on allowing the light to encircle me. Upon opening my eyes, I found a loop of light around my wrist. With a flick of my wrist, it became a hoop. Throwing it upwards, I whistled to Balint to start. With a squawk, he shot off the ground and zoomed past me as he passed through the falling hoop. I caught the loop with my arm as Balint came and perched on my shoulder. "Good job boy! Good boy!" I tickled his chest and Balint chirped happily. "Ready to try again?" I asked and he flapped his wings eagerly. I threw the hoop upwards and off he went rocketing as he passed through it as it fell. We continued to do this until Balint grew tired. Coincidentally, the last rays of sunlight vanished from view as the hoop flickered out of existence. My abilities could only work when the sun was up since they relied on sunlight to function. Balint perched on my shoulder as he nuzzled against my neck. "Good boy, come on let's go in now," I patted him as I made my way back to the palace.

"Ah there you are," Papa smiled just as I came back in, "I was looking for you. Come, dinner is ready now." At the mention of dinner, Balint began squawking loudly in an excited manner. I placed a hand on his back as I chuckled, "Calm down boy, I'll get you dinner later okay?" That seemed to calm him down a little bit. Papa smiled at Balint as he suggested to me to bring him to the dining room. I grinned, happy with the suggestion.

A/N: WHATTTTT 2 chapters in one day?! *Le Gasp*! Yep, I

wrote these a while back and was pretty happy with them so yep, they are now published. Haha, surprise! Another chapter!

Reminders of his past

[image]

"You're sure you have everything?" Oma asked me as I entered the carriage. I nodded. The sky seemed to match my mood as it was dreary and overcast. Oma gave me a smile as she opened her arms for a hug. I embraced her tightly as she patted my back. After a few moments, she pulled away much to my disappointment. "Have a safe trip," she said just as a guard entered the carriage with Berlin. She closed the door and I knew my fate was sealed (quite literally I may add). There were some yells before the carriage jerked as it began its journey. I looked out of the window waving to my grandmother. She waved back and kept doing so until we were out of the castle grounds. Slumping in my seat, I sighed. Berlin patted my back sympathetically as he tried to comfort me. "You'll be fine," he said.

"I hope so," I turned to look out of the window, seeing the trees flash past me. My thoughts began to drift and I tuned out the conversation between the guard and Berlin. I must have fallen asleep because the next thing I knew, Berlin was shaking my shoulder gently as he called my name. I rubbed the remains of sleep from my eyes and asked him where we were. "We're stopping for a break. Come Prince Germany, we're going to one of the inns around here," he said, hopping out of the carriage before helping me out. I stretched my back, muscles sore after sitting for such a long time. Berlin passed me a cloak and I knew what I had to do. Fastening the clip, I drew up the hood and my face became cloaked in the shadows. This was for security reasons and anytime I was out of the castle on personal business, I had to wear the cloak. "Who knows if someone comes to kidnap you for ransom?" Oma would tell me. I didn't mind though. It gave me a sense of security–like a shield against the world, if that made sense. I didn't stick out much, since practically everyone wore cloaks as a preventive measure against the unexpected rain. Berlin and the guard also wore their cloaks and after exchanging a few words with the driver before we set out towards the town.

"FRESHEST VEGETABLES IN TOWN! COME BUY THEM!"

"SPOTTED CHICKENS! SPOTTED CHICKENS FOR SALE!"
"POTS AND PANS! POTS AND PANS!" *CLANG! BANG! CLANG!*
"BEER! BEER! COME GET YOUR BEER!"

All around us, there was a cacophony of voices as merchants tried to sell their goods to us. I politely declined them as I quickened by pace. More things were shoved in my face and I pushed them aside. Just then, I felt someone tug on my hand. I whirled about before I realised it was just Berlin. "Come, let's get out of here," he told me. I could not have felt more relieved. Allowing him to drag me through the crowd, we soon stumbled into the inn. The guard followed closely behind. "Table for 3 please!" Berlin called out to the sleepy teenage boy at the front desk. He nodded and stood up. Limping over to a table he pulled out the chairs for us. I observed his limp, curious. "If I may ask, how did you obtain that limp?" I asked the boy. He paused and leaned heavily against the table. Berlin nudged me painfully in the ribs–his way of scolding me. "Haha, I apologise for my companion's prying question. You don't have to answer." The boy seemed to wake from his trance as he shook his head. "No! No, it's okay," he turned to me, "To answer your question, I got this during the war. The wooden beams of my house fell on me during one of the attacks. Because I didn't have the proper treatment, my leg didn't heal well leaving me with my current limp. I'm fine though." I nodded slowly and thanked him. He smiled brightly before asking for our order. "Give us a while, thank you," Berlin answered. The boy bowed as he shuffled back to the front desk.

"What was that ?" Berlin hissed at me. I shrugged my shoulders and nonchalantly answered, "I was curious. A future ruler should be concerned for his people, no?" Berlin sighed as he shook his head. "Being nosy and concerned are two different things. *That* was being nosy." I shrugged, not really getting it. Berlin sighed again before turning his attention to the menu. I scanned the menu before deciding on a simple bowl of sausages in soup. Berlin called for the boy who brought with him a notepad. After telling him our orders, the boy limped over to the kitchen and passed the notepad to a middle-aged lady. Soon, the clanking of pans could be heard along with the comforting roar of fire burning.

The guard and Berlin began conversing again but I ignored them as I thought about the boy. He must have been around my age. I wonder how he felt during the war. Was he scared? Or was he oblivious to the danger? *Like you.* The two words rang in my head and soon, I found darkness cloaking me before it swallowed me whole.

I was happily playing with my wooden toy castle. It was an exact replica of ours from the tip to the base. It even had our flag hanging from the flagpole on the tallest spire. We even had our family made into little dolls. I was playing with the dolls when Berlin came in. "It's time for lunch, Prince Germany," he gently told me. Dark eye bags lined the bottom of his eyes and he looked haggard. All the adults did actually. Even Vater. When I asked Berlin why, he had a conflicted look on his face. Eventually he told me, "Prince Germany...well, you see all adults are very tired these days. It's like a sickness." My eyes widened as I squeaked, "I don't want you to die!" Berlin chuckled at my words as he promised me he wouldn't die. I made him pinky promise and he swore on his life that wouldn't. "Now come on, we must go to the hall," he tugged on my tiny hand. I followed him along.

"BERLIN! BERLIN! BERLIN!" another servant ran after us. Berlin turned around as the servant stopped in front of us, panting. "What happened?" the nervousness couldn't be hidden from Berlin's voice. The servant gasped for breath before whispering something to him. Berlin's face crumpled in anguish but as soon as it appeared, it disappeared under his professional mask. Even at that age, I knew something bad had happened. "It's okay Berlin, I can go to the dining hall on my own. You can attend to whatever you need to," I told him, letting go of his hand. He insisted on bringing me there but I refused. "Under my orders," I played my last card. Berlin's eyes couldn't betray the relief he must have felt. "O...okay..." he muttered. I quickly walked away and as I turned around the corner, I saw Berlin running away.

I slowed down my pace as I walked towards the hall. I suddenly wasn't very hungry. Had the sickness Berlin told me about claimed his family? He must feel horrible. I would too if Vater died. Speaking of Vater...I stopped in front of our family portrait. It was just Vater and me. I don't know much about my biological mother. All Vater says is that she died when she gave birth to me. He didn't seem to care much though. So

naturally, I learnt not to care too much either. As I looked at the portrait, I felt a slightly hollow feeling in my chest. I missed Vater. I didn't see him anymore. An idea formed in my head as I decided to surprise him. Skipping, I soon reached his office and swung the door open. There was no one. Instead, the bookshelf was open. My eyes widened. "Vati! Vati!" I called out loudly. No reply. Panic welled in my chest. Had Vater been claimed by the sickness? I looked into the room behind the secret door. I wasn't surprised there was one here since our castle had thousands of them littered about. They were supposed to help keep us hidden in case of a breach in castle security. The room stretched on for a bit before it dropped. Nervously, I walked in and soon found a staircase. It led down to god knows where. "What do I do?" I bit my cheek. Just then, I heard voices coming from down below.

"STOP ALREADY! I BEG YOU!" an unfamiliar voice yelled before the resounding sound of a whip could be heard. There was a cry of pain and then... "Why should I? Hmm?" it was Vater's voice. In a blink of an eye, I rushed down the stairs, not thinking through my choices. When I reached the bottom of the stairs, I found myself face to face with a large wooden door. It was slightly ajar and I cautiously peeked into the room. I wish I hadn't.

A pair of big white wings were on the ground and the ends were tainted with blood. The scent of iron was nauseating. A boy around my age laid on the ground, crying as an older man was thrown back onto the hard ground. There was a thud as a spherical shape rolled towards me. It was an eye. I let out a shriek, horrified and disgusted. The boy and man looked at me and I could see hope filling the boy's eyes. I looked away. The door I was behind opened further to reveal Vater, his uniform stained with blood. In his hands, there was a knife, some flesh hanging off it. I couldn't help the nausea that rose within me. "Vati..." my voice faltered. This wasn't the father I knew. No, this strange man had Vater's face but not his kindness that I knew. This man...he wore a sadistic smile on his face as he tried to hide the maniacal gleam in his eyes. "Yes Germany? What seems to be the matter?" he asked sweetly, bending down to my level. I stood frozen in fear as I stuttered, "Va...Vat...Vati...what...wha...what happe...happened?" Vater's grin only seemed to grow wider as he chuckled. "Oh you sweet innocent thing, Germany. You see, these people are very evil–"

"SHUT UP YOU BASTARD! YOU'RE THE EVIL–" the man's words were cut off as Vater sunk his knife into his thigh. "Interrupt me one more time and your son's wings are off his back," Vater warned him. The boy's eyes widened as he looked at me, pleading. I looked away again. Vater stroked my hair and I resisted the urge to flinch away. "As I was saying, these people are very evil and they have been caught trying to disobey us. That's why Vati needs to punish them," he said.

"STOP LYING! GERMANY, YOU CAN HELP–OUCH!" the boy was given an iron backhand by Vater. There was a maniacal look in his eyes as Vater began kicking him. He ripped the knife from the man's thigh as he forced the boy onto the ground, back facing up. He stuck the knife into the boy's back and there was a ripping sound as the boy screamed loudly in pain. A wing fell to the ground, its white feathers slowly stained with blood. I cowered in the corner even as the man looked at me pleadingly. Vater...no this monster...looked at me as he trudged over. He took out another knife from his pocket as he placed it in my palm. "Come my boy, let's serve justice to this imbecile," he chuckled as he dragged me over to the boy. My eyes widened as I shook my head wildly. "No...no...this is wrong!" I frantically said. The boy, who seemed to be delirious judging by his chuckling, looked at me. His eyes were clouded over and he seemed to be half-conscious. The man begged us to spare his son but Vater simply stabbed his thigh again. Vater then turned to me as he grabbed my wrist. My hand shook uncontrollably as the knife slipped from my grasp. It landed in the boy's back, next to the wing that was still intact. The boy roared with pain. Vater shook his head as he savagely ripped out the other wing. The boy didn't scream or move. He had finally passed out. I stood there frozen, breath shaky. What did I just do? What...my brain seemed to collapse under the weight of what I had just done. Vater said something but I couldn't make out what he said. In a panic, I pushed him aside as I ran.

I gasped as I awoke, causing Berlin and the guard to look at me worriedly. "Are you okay?" the guard asked. I rubbed my temples feeling a headache coming on. "Ye...Yea," I said. The guard narrowed his eyes and was about to say something when the food came. *Thank the gods.* Berlin thanked the lady as he passed her the cash. The lady bowed before heading to the kitchen. I quickly grabbed the utensils and began eating. The food tasted bland in my mouth and even though it was warm, it didn't warm the frost that

had suddenly creeped up within me. I shivered and pulled the cloak closer to me.

Arrival to the air-field

[image]

"We're here!" the driver announced. Stretching, I hopped out of the carriage–much to Warsaw's horror–as I took a breath of fresh air. "Ahhhhh, much better," I nodded, feeling the light breeze tousle my hair. "Prince Poland! Please be careful! Who knows if there were attackers?!" Warsaw scolded me. I turned to face him, smirking as I cheekily answered, "Why would there be? We are literally in the most secure place in the whole of Pangea!" Warsaw sighed as he muttered something about me having no sense of safety. I pretended to not hear him. My good mood didn't need to be dampened.

The sky was a dusky colour and there were a few carriages in the distance. They were carrying other royals or rich children. (And when I mean rich, I mean very rich. Very very rich.) This place was called the Pick-up point or air field and it was the safest place in Pangea. As the academy was high up in the sky, the only way we could get there was through a special portal that only the Principal, United Nations, could open. He would pick us up from this place which gave it its name.

Just then, I heard a familiar voice calling me. "Poland! Poland!" I turned around to see Czechia and Slovakia running towards me. They crashed into me, sending me sprawling onto the ground. Warsaw and the servant gasped as they rushed to my aid. "I'm fine," I laughed as the twins were pulled away from me. "Whatever the case is," Warsaw turned to the twins, fury in his eyes, "Next time don't do that! That is a serious security breach! What you did–" I placed my hand on his shoulder as I shook my head. *Don't continue.* Warsaw grunted before stepping away to help unload the luggage.

"Sorry about that. Warsaw can be a little overprotective sometimes," I apologised to the twins. They nodded, not seeming to really care. I smiled inwardly. The twins, Czechia and Slovakia, were my closest friends and they lived in the capital of my kingdom. They were 2

years my junior but that didn't stop us from forming a close bond with one another. Their father was a merchant who sold alcohol and Papa often bought beer from him. In fact, it was on one of Papa's trips to their father's shop that I first met them.

"How was your trip here? I hope it wasn't too bumpy," I asked them. Czechia smirked as she nudged her brother, "This guy threw up so many times on the way here." "I did not! You did!" Slovakia retorted. They began bickering like two children and I couldn't help but laugh.

"It's not funny Poland!" Slovakia whined.

"Sure as hell is!"

Slovakia glowered at the floor and Czechia's grin only widened. "Oh yea, I heard that the Western dorms are damaged so they might be putting us together for the time being until everything is repaired," she nonchalantly said. "Huh, is that so? I hope if that's the case I'm put with someone good," I mused. Czechia nodded before Slovakia piped, "Rumours say that it's ASEAN's kids' doing. Fighting around and one of them caused serious damage to the place." I snorted. Professor ASEAN had 11 kids, 8 of which studied in the academy, and man were they a handful. Especially that MalPhilIndo trio. If I had to bet, it was probably one of their petty squabbles that led to the destruction of the Western dorms. They were known for causing a hellish load of damage thanks to their fights.

"Well, if that's the case Professor ASEAN is probably not happy with the amount of money he's paying for the repairs. I'm not surprised if he's in a bad mood at the opening ceremony," I answered.

"When is he ever in a good mood?" Slovakia scoffed. He wasn't wrong. Prof ASEAN was rarely seen smiling and often wasn't in the best mood. In fact, the only time I had seen him smile was when that stupid German and China scored full marks on the maths test. Other than that, he was like our old grumpy stablemaster. But who could blame him? Taking care of 11 crazy people was no mean feat even if the 3 youngest were the most mature by far. Add that to his current workload of marking papers and you can understand why he was so grumpy all the time. Sometimes, I wondered if he even

got any sleep. Once I counted the number of cups of coffee he had and it amounted to 10 cups. Even Professor EU didn't drink that much.

"MASTER SLOVAKIA! MISS CZECHIA!" a servant called for the twins. Bading me goodbye, they ran back to their carriage. Warsaw came over to my side as soon as they were gone to notify me that all the luggage had been taken out of the carriage. Thanking him, I told him that I was going to walk around the area. "Make sure you stay within my sight. I can't have you going missing around here even if the air field here is considered the safest place around. Do you understand Prince Poland?" I nodded before running off.

*

"Oof!" I fell to the ground with a thud. A man, roughly in his late 30s, was on the ground groaning. When I caught his gaze, he immediately scrambled to his feet as he bowed multiple times. "I'm so sorry Prince Poland! I'm so sorry!" he apologised over and over. He seemed to be on the verge of a panic attack. Stunned and unsure of what I should do, I simply blinked at him. "Berlin? What's–oh," it was that stupid German! Fury welled in my gut. Somehow, it had become a feeling that I commonly associated with him. Whenever I saw him, the red ugly monster would rear its head threatening to bite his head off. Germany looked at me, a small smile on his face. *How dare he smile at me!* It was almost as if he had heard my thoughts for that smile he wore soon vanished. "I'm so sorry for what Berlin did. I hope you're okay Prince Poland? Is there anything we can do for you?" he asked cordially. That was it. The red ugly monster broke free of the weak restraints that I had placed and it began its attack.

"Oh yes, fine as day. Definitely. Noooo, my wings are still on my back. Mmm-hmm. Yep, so I'm fine. But you know what you can do? GET THE HELL OUT OF MY SIGHT! NOW!" I yelled prompting the people in the area to look at us. Germany's eye twitched ever so slightly and I felt a surge of satisfaction. But it soon mixed with my regret making my stomach turn. *I shouldn't have...No, he deserves it...but he-*

"Of course, we'll be on our way," Germany answered, his voice

sickly polite. I wanted to puke. *Do you always have to be so damn polite sounding?* Germany touched Berlin's shoulder and whispered something before walking away. With the excitement all over, the people turned away, gossiping. I could only hope they weren't talking bad about me. *Why would they? Germany's the monster, not you.* "Not me..." I muttered under my breath as I turned to head back to the carriage.

A/N: Phew, I did it. Anyways, starting from next week, Ren might get another chapter posted. (I hope. I still have no mojo jojo.) Anyways, if you are reading this from the future, Happy New Year, pull your ear, please be a good kid this year. :)

Ogay, bye!

Edit: I realised Poland's flag wasn't there so I had to put it in. -_-

Return to hell

[image]

Eh? Why is Berlin apologising? I thought as I walked over to him. "Berlin? What's–oh," my gaze landed on Poland who was sitting on the ground. As soon as he saw me, his face contorted in anger. *First try to dial down the other party's anger. Give a small smile, show that you are willing to listen and do what they ask,* Oma's voice rang in my head. I tried to give what I hope was an apologetic smile but from the way Poland's glare sharpened, it obviously didn't work. *If that doesn't work, apologise, ask if they are okay. If necessary, offer help.* "I'm so sorry for what Berlin did. I hope you're okay Prince Poland? Is there anything we can do for you?" I asked Poland in what I hope was my most polite voice. Instantly, his glare vanished and I felt a sense of triumph. Ha, it worked–

"Oh yes, fine as day. Definitely. Noooo, my wings are still on my back. Mmm-hmm. Yep, so I'm *fine*. But you know what you can do? GET THE HELL OUT OF MY SIGHT! NOW!" Poland yelled sarcastically, shocking me. Okay, scratch that. "On to step three," I sighed internally as I prepared my answer. *Accept the other party's request if it's reasonable enough. If not, try to give something similar.*

"Of course, we'll be on our way." Whispering to Berlin to start walking away, I gave Poland one last discreet look before walking off. As soon as we were out of ear-shot, Berlin stopped and turned to me. "I was fine, you didn't have to step in Prince Germany," he frowned heavily.

"It's nothing."

Berlin's frown deepened but he remained silent. He knew there was no use in fighting with me about this. The moment I had set my mind on something, that was it. There was no way of changing my thinking. Just as he was about to say something else, the sky suddenly opened up as a figure floated down from the heavens. "The portals shall be opening in a few minutes time! Please prepare your luggages now." It was Vice-Principal INTERPOL who was

Principal UN's right-hand woman. She was the discipline master and was feared by many of the students for she was known to deal out harsh punishments. Even towards us royals which many "normal" people dare not offend. However, she was always fair in her ways which I respected.

Berlin sighed as he motioned to me to start walking back to the carriage. We began our journey , walking briskly. By the time we got back, the portal was already open and the driver and guard were already taking out the luggage. These would be sent to my dorm room immediately. Berlin hurried past me to help them. I stood quietly near the blue glowy portal as I watched them taking the heavy suitcases out from the back of the carriage. Soon everything was out and Berlin was rolling them into the portal. As he pushed the last one in, he nodded to me. It was time to go. Thanking the driver and guard, I took a breath before stepping into the portal.

Walking out from the other side, I found many other students walking out of their own portals, their servants trailing behind them. Many of them were excitedly running over to their friends, chatting about their holidays. I spied the Princes of Britannia, Canada and America, chuckling as they exited their portal. Many people swarmed over to them–technically just America–including Poland.

"Hey *Doitsu*, what's with the long face?" I spun around to face Neko Japan. I forced a smile onto my face and attempted to direct the conversation elsewhere. "Oh hi Japan! How was your holiday?"

Japan crossed her arms, her cat ears twitching irritatedly. "Don't go about and change the topic Germany. Tell me what's with your long face?" she demanded. "Isn't it obvious?" I rolled my eyes as I gestured to the majestic school building, "I'm not happy to start school." The building was glowing brightly–courtesy of the starlight that coated the building (don't ask how they got it onto the building). Strangely though, the Western half of the building was dimmed and darkened. It seemed to be draped in some cloth. *How strange...*

"Germany! Did you hear me?" I rubbed the back of my head feeling

it throb after the hit she just delivered. " W*as zum Teufel*!" I swore loudly, earning a glare from Berlin who was waiting at the side, "For a small girl you sure have a powerful hand." Japan grinned but it was soon replaced by a frown as she repeated her question. Sheepishly, I shook my head. She smacked me on the back and I swore again.

"Mind your language Prince! Just because Princess Japan does not understand what you are saying doesn't mean *I* don't."

I shot an apologetic look at Berlin before making a face at Japan. She stuck her tongue out, cat ears turning forward in a sign of happiness. "I was saying, I overheard that the Western dorms are undergoing renovation works thanks to an accident that happened over the holiday season which destroyed the place. Bet you can guess who were the culprits. Clue: Starts with an 'A' and ends with a 'SEAN'."

I sighed and nodded. "Prof. ASEAN's kids right? Let me take a guess, it was the Three Musketeers?" I grimaced. The MalPhilIndo trio–aka the three Musketeers–were super infamous in school for being the cause of some of the most damaging fights. It was a wonder that Principal UN hadn't asked them to leave the academy. Then again, they were somewhat under Prof. ASEAN's protection.

Japan nodded and I sighed again. "Oh well, at least the dorms are supposedly getting upgrades, at least that's what I overheard. All the dorms I think. Tower by tower. But we might have to share rooms if that's the case," she added. Another sigh escaped through my lips. *Really? This is what I come back to?* I was about to ask Japan something else when America called her over. "Ah, I must go now *Doitsu*. Shall we talk more later?" she asked politely.

"Yea sure, we can," I answered, feeling a pang of disappointment. *Why must she join them?* Japan smiled at me before skipping off as she joined America and co. I watched them laughing and I felt a sense of jealousy. *Why can't I be like you Japan? Or Italy? Why can't you two be like me? Why does everyone forgive you?* Berlin placed a hand on my shoulder and I sighed as I turned away from them. "Why can't anyone just forgive our kingdom?" I murmured. Berlin patted me as he answered, "It's just the way things are I suppose

Prince. After all, we have done some evil things in the past and they probably don't believe that we have turned over a new leaf."

"Do you think I'll turn evil, Berlin? Like Vati and Opa?"

Berlin stayed silent as he thought about it. "I don't believe so. They...well please don't mind me speaking bad about your family but they were filled with much bitterness and resentment. You on the other hand Prince...you grew up wary of the crimes the previous rulers have committed. I think that has made you wary enough of starting another war. Besides, with the Queen guiding you, I highly doubt you will start another one. So don't worry too much Prince Germany."

I nodded and thanked him for his words. "No problem Prince. As your servant, it is my duty to support you," he answered.

Translations:
Doitsu (Japanese): Germany

Was zum Teufel! (German): What the hell!

All translations by google translate.

Hello hello! I'm backkkkkkkkk again! Hehe, here's a little sneak peak to the ASEAN gang who I hope will show up in the story at some point. And yes, the MalPhilIndo trio (or Three Musketers if you will) are really a bunch of trouble makers.

ASEAN: Why did I adopt these idiots?

Me: Because you're a nice guy.

ASEAN: Well, ASEAN regrets his choices.

Me: ;-;

Anyways, like I said, school's starting so I dunno if I'll update as often. Sighhhh, the projects are coming back to haunt me. Also, do you think Ger and Pol will be sharing the same dorm

room? Comment will ya?

Okay bye y'all!

Horror

[image]

"And then this guy ran for his life the second Aussie set loose some geese!" we roared with laughter as America told us another story about his family. Canada sniffed as he pretended to be hurt. "Geese are scary. Where the little christer got 'em is beyond me. Mom knows we shouldn't keep geese in the palace grounds," he crossed his arms, unamused.

America smiled slyly as he whispered, "It's a secret!" Canada smacked him on the back but Ame only grinned wider and stuck out his tongue. The others and I laughed at their banter. Just then, the school bells chimed. A hush fell over the crowd as a man in a pristine white suit floated down from the sky. It was our principal, UN. He smiled, a little smug if you asked me, as he descended and landed on the balcony of the school building. Raising his hands, he opened his mouth and...

Nothing came out. A chuckle went through the crowd. UN frowned as he turned around to face Vice-principal INTERPOL. After a moment, he turned back to face us, a smile on his face. "Welcome everybody to Pangea Preparatory Academy! For our new students, if you didn't know, I'm United Nations, UN for short. I am your principal. And the lady over there," he gestured to Miss INTERPOL who was hiding in the shadows, "is your vice-principal, INTERPOL." A murmur went through the crowd as the Year 1s digested this information. UN paused for a moment before continuing, "Normally I would give out the announcements for the year in my speech on the first day of school. However, this year I will have to deviate a little as this concerns your living arrangements."

"Huh? What about our living arrangements?"

"Oh great, we're going to live with others right?"

"What?! No way..."

"I heard that one group of the students caused this."

UN cleared his throat and all became silent. "As I was saying, normally all of you would have had your own private rooms. Unfortunately, due to an...erm...unexpected fight during the holidays, the Western dormitory was destroyed. We decided to take the chance to refurbish the dorms and will be doing so with all the other dorms as well in due time. Unfortunately this means that we are short of some rooms. In order to solve this, take it as good or bad news, we have decided to let you..."

"Share rooms."

The second he said that, the field erupted into shouts. "Ugh, no way! I'm definitely going to be paired up with that idiotic Russian or that Chinese asshole," America grumbled, crossing his arms. "How do you know that?" Japan countered and America launched into a whole rant about how UN liked to force people who hated...blah blah blah. I wasn't really paying attention. My whole mind was simply fixated on one thing–Who was my roommate?

*

"The lists are currently being passed down. You will be paired up with 2 other students of the same gender. However to foster inter-level bonding, we will be putting students of different age groups together. You may or may not get another person from your level."

I was passed my scroll. The paper felt smooth and cold in my hands. It was tied together with a golden ribbon with my name etched on it in silver. In one swift motion, I untied the ribbon as the scroll unfurled. As I read through the names, I felt a sense of horror. The world seemed to twist and turn as I felt my body turn cold.

No...no...I can't have...I...I...holy shit...no way...

"Poland! Are you okay?" America looked at me, his black eyes boring into mine. I shook my head, too shocked to say a word. From the corner of my eye, I saw Germany with his head in his hands, a resigned expression on his face. Canada picked up my list–I hadn't even realised it fell–as he read through it. His face morphed

through a couple emotions before it finally settled on...pity. Japan, South Korea and a few other countries swarmed over to him and gasped as they read through the list. "Oh no, I'm so sorry Poland!" Japan cried as she hurried over to hug me. I hugged her back, or at least I think I did, everything was so blurry then.

"Ugh, what was UN thinking?! Do you want me to get UN to switch our rooms? I don't mind at all," America asked, an indignant look on his face. The others murmured their approval. As if hearing America, UN made an announcement.

"Ah, a side note, whoever we paired you up with cannot be changed."

Shouts erupted, the loudest being America. "NO FAIR! YOU CAN'T JUST PAIR UP TWO ENEMIES!" he yelled, waving the paper about. "With all due respect Prince America, I can. You aren't the boss of me," UN stated calmly. America's eyes narrowed as the paper began smouldering. Canada's eyes widened as he flapped his arms wildly to catch his brother's attention. America didn't notice him. The tips of his hair began to flicker and soon they were on fire. UN flicked his hand and immediately the flames died out as America swayed on his feet. Canada hurried over to catch his brother. "Prince America, please don't test my patience. The decision is final," UN answered as he turned around, "After you are done with supper, please head to your rooms. Good night and see you tomorrow." Then, he was gone.

"What a bastard," America muttered as he struggled to sit straight. Canada was frowning as he supported America. "You idiot! Are you okay? I already said not to trigger UN! Look what he did to you," Canada scolded, frowning heavily. America grinned lazily as he chuckled weakly.

"I'm sorry, this is all my fault..." I murmured. Japan hugged me tighter as she shook her head. "No, no Poland. This isn't your fault! UN's just being stupid." The other countries nodded and I noticed a few were sending frosty glares to Germany. Speaking of him...the boy was slumped over the table in defeat as he looked at us. *I don't want this shit either*, his gaze seemed to say. Or maybe it was, *Great, I am stuck with my enemy.* Germany's looks were difficult to read

considering he only had just about 3 different expressions. Neutral, more neutral and then neutral with a dash of anguish.

Just what are you hiding behind that mask of yours Germany?

*

"You sure you don't want to switch?" America asked for the hundredth time as we walked to the dorm room. I sighed, resigned, and nodded. "I'd prefer that you don't get into trouble with UN. Besides, he and I probably won't talk much," I answered as I placed my hand on the door handle. America stayed silent, chewing his cheek.

"I...I...I just don't want you to get hurt. If that asshole hurts you..." America's dark irises seemed to have little flames flickering within them as his voice turned low. I placed a hand on his arm (I was supposed to place it on his shoulder but I'm too short.) trying to soothe him. I liked America and his ideology of a world filled with freedom but sometimes he could be...well...rather hot-headed and reactive. Then again, he *was* the fire embodiment so that could be his ability at fault. (Who am I kidding? He's just naturally hot-headed.)

"It'll be fine."

"Tch, if you say so. But if anything happens, promise you'll tell me okay?"

"Deal."

America paused for a moment before he muttered a 'good night' before shuffling away to his dorm. I stared at the handle, feeling the coldness ebb away the longer I held it. *It'll be fine Polska. He can't harm you. There's 2 other people...nothing will happen.* Even with those reassuring words, my stomach still churned. My back burned with the reminder of what Germany's father did during the war.

"Hey! Are you going to open the door or what?" a voice jolted me out of my thoughts. I turned around to see a short country with an unamused expression on his face. He had the colours of my flag but

reversed and on the top left corner, there was a crescent moon and 5 stars. He wore glasses and was currently tapping his foot impatiently. "Oh! Sorry, come come let's go in now," I hurriedly opened the door. I hurried in and bumped into someone.

"Sorr–YOU!" Germany and I stared at each other. The short country shook his head and rolled his eyes.

"Aiya..."

A/N: Hehehe, another day and another chapter. Anyone can guess which country Poland is roomies with? (Hint for those who dunno: He's from ASEAN.)

If you are wondering what UN's ability is, it's ability nullification. Considering that the United Nations was created to promote peace amongst countries, human rights and other things, I thought that ability nullification would be a fitting ability for him. How it works is that UN can cast an invisible "force-field" over the person whose ability he wants to nullify. A side effect of the ability on "victims" is that they will be drained of their energy (aka why America was so shaky after UN used his ability.) UN only uses it on students who are getting out of hand and if he needs to stop fights.

Anyways, that's all, see you soon!

Oh Germany...what have you done?

[image]

Poland and I broke eye contact as we looked at the newcomer. He was quite short, maybe 2 heads shorter than me? When I was young, I heard the term resting bitch face. It fitted this country pretty well. He blinked at us, seemingly uncaring that he was in a room with royals. "Who are you?" I broke the silence. "Singapore, Republic of Singapore. Year 5," his voice was clipped and curt as he looked at me with his ruby red eyes.

"And you are...?" Singapore tilted his head as he raised his eyebrow. Poland jumped in first as he extended a hand, "I'm Republic of Poland, you can call me Poland! Year 7." It kind of amazed me how Poland's emotions could change so fast. One second he could be glaring at me, the next, he was acting as sweet as honey. Singapore shook Poland's hand as he answered, "Nice to meet you. May we get along well." Poland smiled but I could tell it wasn't a true smile. *It's not going to be a nice year with Germany around,* his smile seemed to say. "Germany, Federal Republic of Germany. I...I'm in the same year as Poland," I shook Singapore's hand surprised at how light his grip was. It felt as if he wasn't too interested in actually knowing us and was doing it just to be polite. Or...he could be using it as a facade to hide how nervous he was around us. *Or he's just scared of you,* the little voice in my head chimed in unhelpfully. I frowned.

An awkward silence filled the room as Singapore's gaze kept flitting between me and Poland. We were standing in a circle, motionless. Poland kept looking at me and I made sure to not stare back at him. We must have stood here for a couple minutes just staring at one another. I felt as if Singapore was silently waiting for us to break the silence but was unwilling to do it himself. After what felt like eternity, I cleared my throat as I asked, "Shall we divide the place?"

"Anywhere far from *you* would be perfect," Poland muttered. I pretended to not hear him. After some back and forth with Singapore, we decided that Poland would take the makeshift room– really just part of the common space sectioned out using an artificial wall. Meanwhile, Singapore would take the bedroom part of the original floor plan. I would take the other makeshift room– the walk-in closet turned into a bedroom.

"Well, that settles it. Would any of you like to use the toilet first to wash up?" Singapore asked politely.

"I'll go first," Poland answered hurriedly as he rushed to collect his items. As if he was chased by lions, he entered the toilet and slammed the door shut. Singapore raised an eyebrow but said nothing as he picked up his luggage on the ground. "I'll be heading to my room first," he told me before entering his room, the door closing shut. I sighed as I brought my luggages into my own room.

*

I was the last to shower and by the time I did, it was already 10.30pm. Hurrying into the toilet, I could smell the soap that the previous occupants used. Locking the door, I quickly took off my clothes before giving myself a quick shower. The water was warm and I felt my tense muscles relax. I wanted to stay there forever. Unfortunately, I couldn't. When I was done, I wore my sleeping clothes before throwing my dirty clothes in the laundry basket with my name labelled on it. Then, I went to brush my teeth.

After I was done, I headed back to my room as I collapsed onto the bed. *So soft...mmm*. I was beginning to doze off when suddenly, I heard a knock on the connecting door between Singapore's and my room. Blinking sleep away from my eyes, I hurried over to open the door. Standing there was Singapore in blue pyjamas printed with some strange lion-fish hybrid.

"May I talk to you please Prince Germany?" he asked.

"Just Germany's fine. Please come in," I opened the door wider as Singapore shuffled in. He stood awkwardly in the centre of the room. Gone was the confidence he possessed when I first met him.

After a few beats, Singapore began to speak. "I hope I wasn't disrupting your sleep. You see, I noticed you and Poland seem to have...ah, how do I say it? Mmm...not the best relationship."

"And how does this concern you?" I asked, my voice coming out harsher than I intended it to be. Singapore didn't flinch as he continued, "I'm your roommate and I think I have the right to know what's going on between you two so that I don't do anything to upset both parties."

"Whatever happens between me and Poland isn't any of your business."

"But there–"

"Please just keep your nose out of this okay!" I yelled. Singapore visibly flinched as he took a step back. A pang of regret struck my heart. "I..." the words got choked in my throat. *Why...Germany...Why?* Singapore swallowed as he bowed apologetically. "I apologise Prince Germany. I should not have been so nosy," he forced a smile onto his face, "I shall leave you to rest now. Good night." Before I could reply, he had already left.

Falling onto my bed, I began to hear the voices starting up. These voices...they were like my personal angel and devil. I liked to call them East and West since each of them faced that specific direction. East was the devil while West was the angel. "Why did you do that Germany? Look at what's going on now!" West scolded me. I heard a scoff before East retorted, "The boy had a reason! That stupid country was prying into our business!" But even as he said that, it didn't stop the thought that had creeped up on me. *Singapore probably hates me now.* The realisation dawned on me and guilt gnawed at my heart and mind incessantly.

East's voice softened as he said, "Don't feel so guilty Germany. That *arschloch* shouldn't have pried into our business with Poland." That didn't make me feel any better. *Why was I so mean?* "Germany, you should apologise *now* to Singapore," West advised. *Yea...I should–* "WHY SHOULD HE?! IT ISN'T HIS FAULT!" East's sudden increase in volume made my temples throb. The two began fighting which made me groan.

"Shut up!" I barked, rubbing my temples wearily, "*Ich bin so fertig mit dieser Scheiße!*" The voices quietened down and I sighed in relief. *Finally some peace.* But even without the two warring voices in my head, I found it hard to fall asleep. A combination of a terrible headache and the guilt I was carrying kept me wide awake. Toss, turn. Toss, turn. Toss, turn. Time ticked away as morning creeped up on me. Despite my fatigue, I just couldn't sleep. *What if Singapore hates me now? What should I do? Why did I yell? No, it's his fault...no mine...ughhhh...my head hurts.*

I must have eventually fallen asleep because the next thing I knew, my alarm clock was ringing loudly. Slamming a hand down onto the annoying machine, I begrudgingly got up. Why was the clock's alarm so loud? It was as if the school wanted to deafen students early in the morning. Grabbing my clothing for the school day and my toiletries, I shuffled to the bathroom to wash up.

*

"Oh, you're here as well," Singapore said, his tone indifferent towards me as I entered the bathroom.

"Yea," was my answer. We lapsed into silence, the only sounds produced were the sounds of water running and the bristles of the toothbrush scraping across my teeth. Singapore finished first and he quickly took off to his room. I sighed internally, half grateful and half resigned. *I think he hates me now.* "Well...you did snap at him," East chimed in unhelpfully. Oh great, the voices were back.

"Oh shut it East. Germany, you should apologise," West chided the devil in my mind. *Yea...I should...* Maybe it was the morning or maybe it was the extreme guilt I felt, whatever the case is, I had made up my mind. I would apologise to Singapore for my rudeness. All I could hope for was that, unlike Poland, he would accept it willingly.

+ + + +

I ch bin so fertig mit dieser Scheiße! : **I'm so done with this shit!**

+ + + +

Dilemma

[image]

"But you-"

"JUST MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS WILL YOU?" Germany's outburst surprised and shocked me. I found myself taking a wary step back as I saw regret fill his eyes. "...ich..." was all he said. I swallowed nervously. Wanting to get away as quickly as I could, I bowed before apologising for being so *Kaypoh*. Before I could hear his reply, I left the room.

Once in my room, I fell into my chair. *Papa, why did you give me such a tough job?* I thought, rubbing my forehead. Our meeting was still fresh in my mind as it had happened not more than a few days ago–2 days to be precise.

–

"Papa? You called for me?" I peeked into his office. Papa ASEAN was sitting in his chair, massaging his temples as one hand held his glasses. When he saw me, he hurriedly put them back on as he asked, "Did you get me the medication Singa dear?" I nodded, passing him a bottle of headache relieving medication from the sick bay. He opened the bottle as he popped 3 pills into his mouth before swallowing them.

"Do you know why else I called you, Singa?" he asked after a moment. I shook my head. "If it's to do with Mal and the others, I swear I did nothing," I raised my hands. My idiotic brothers couldn't stay out of trouble for one second and they had recently just destroyed the Western tower during one of their fights. I think it was over Malaysia's Milo drink or Indonesia's Indomie...I don't know.

Somedays, I wondered what made the heavens decide to give them powers. Clearly, my siblings weren't made to deal with them properly. I shook my head to clear my thoughts as Papa began to speak. "Ugh, don't remind me about them Singa. I'm almost ready to disown them at this point in time," he grumbled as I giggled. Truthfully, although Papa had

stated this many times to the family, we all knew he would never do so. He had taken all of us in when our parents died during the war and treated us like his own flesh and blood. Shaking his head, Papa continued, "But no, I didn't call you over because of that. Rather...could I ask you for a favour?"

"And what would that be?" I asked, my eyebrow raised.

"I would like you to be put together with Poland and Germany."

"What?! Aren't they enemies or something?! Why would they be together?!" I squawked as Papa sighed. "You can ask that question to UN. Heavens forbid the two cause as much trouble as MalPhilIndo. But that aside, you are the only country around here mature enough for the job. Besides you've always been quite neutral and a firm believer of peace and harmony. If anything happens you can try to diffuse the situation. UN wishes for you to help the two become friends soon...he...he...promise you won't tell anyone?" I nodded, and he continued, "He suspects that there is an approaching threat. One that will heavily affect both their kingdoms. If they do not work together, he believes the whole of this land will be destroyed."

I gulped when I heard this. "What threat?" I wasn't sure why I whispered. The room's atmosphere felt tense all of a sudden. Papa shook his head as he told me that he could say no more. "Even I'm not too sure, it seems that UN wishes to keep this secret threat to himself. All he tells me and the others is that he's sure that there's a threat and only those two countries in particular can stop it. He's being very mysterious about this whole thing," he shook his head, a grim smile on his face. I nodded, filing the information away in my mind. Papa looked at me smiling fondly although I could see he definitely felt sorry for me.

"Can you help me with this Singapore?"

"Alright. I just hope I don't get hit by the two. Or yelled at."

"It should be fine."

–

Haha, how wrong he was. It wasn't even the first day and already I

had made an enemy out of Germany. But who could blame him? He was dealt a pretty bad hand in his life being the son and grandson of Third Reich and German Empire respectively. Because both had started two major wars and killed many many people, everyone hated Germany and his kingdom. Poland especially. Given that I had asked him about his past–as a stranger no less–I wasn't terribly surprised by his reaction. Although hearing the German yell did surprise me. I had never heard him raise his voice before (to be fair, I had never met him and only saw him in passing). Germany was always a quiet person, shy and always had his head down in a book. Somewhat like me.

Maybe I need someone else. But who...not America, no, he doesn't like Germany much. Besides, I don't really know him that well. Russia? No, he hates both of them. Not for the first time, I regretted that I was not very close to the other countries. Sure, I was acquainted with most of them on varying levels but was I truly friends with them? Not exactly. And my siblings, adopted or not, did not count. *Ughhh, who can help me?* I ran my hand through my hair frustrated. I was a small country and I had swore that I would not put myself into trouble yet here I was breaking my oath.

As I continued brooding about this, my mind drifted to the threat. What was this threat? Why did Mr UN refuse to share more about it? How was it affecting the land? "Perhaps a famine? No, that hardly ties in with Poland and Germany. A flood? Possible but the whole land? No. What could it be? What could it be?" I repeated the question over and over again.

I didn't sleep that night as questions kept me awake. Tossing and turning in my bed gave me no respite from the haunting feeling. Who or what is the threat? How can I get Germany to open up? Why is this job so hard? Is there a way to get the two to be friends? Does he hate me now? My mind was active and in overdrive as adrenaline kept me wide awake. I could hear the light snores of Poland's room (the walls were really that thin) and the sound of fabric flipping about from Germany's. Seemed like he also couldn't sleep.

As the first rays of dawn approached, I got up and plodded to the toilet. As I was halfway through my morning routine, Germany

came in. "Oh, you're here too," I found myself saying. Why did I sound as if I was so indifferent to his presence? Germany murmured something and we lapsed into silence. When I finished, I hurried off. Would it be a lie if I said I wasn't scared of Germany in the slightest? After his yelling yesterday, I found myself becoming more wary of my steps around him.

Grabbing my satchel off the desk, I hurried out of the dorm room just as Germany came out of the bathroom. He opened his mouth to say something but I hurried away. Rushing out of the room, I headed down the spiral staircase to the dining hall. A few students from my level greeted me with a smile as I passed by them while walking along the hall.

*

"Woah Singa, did you not sleep yesterday? Your eyebags are so dark," Malaysia, my (real) brother commented as I sat next to him. My other siblings nodded and I let out a soft sigh. "Long story short, I got into an "argument" with Germany when I was trying to find out what his deal was between him and Poland. Turns out," I shrugged, "The guy's not that keen on letting people into his past. Not that I can blame him."

"And when you mean an argument...you mean?" Laos raised her eyebrows as she looked at the MalPhilIndo trio. They looked away, whistling as if nothing was wrong. I shook my head and answered dejectedly, "Not really an argument. More of an angry German yelling at me to mind my own business. Not that that's any better honestly."

"Well go figure Singa, you asked the guy the one question he'd rather keep mum about. I mean, who would want to talk about their oh-so great parent, who mind you, started another war, killing thousands of people. Out of those thousands, a few were our parents. Oh yes, Germany indeed," Indonesia's voice dripped with sarcasm.

The table's occupants fell silent as a sombre mood fell upon us. The pain of losing our parents was still fresh and even if we seemed okay to an extent, none of us truly were. I was 6, Mal was 7, when

J.E killed our father, **Johor Empire***. I wouldn't forget the smell of blood invading my nostrils as my father was repeatedly stabbed in the chest and abdomen until J.E was satisfied. We were under the tyrant's rule for 2 years and they were the worst years of my life. No freedom and no rights, life was truly a living hell. Malaysia and I often would dream about this when we first were taken in by Papa ASEAN and in the beginning, waking up in the middle of the night screaming was a regular occurrence. Over the years, we healed to a certain extent but one trigger and it would all flood back. I saw Malaysia's face paling slightly and I went to rub circles around his back. He shot me a grateful smile and I smiled back.

"For the love of UN, it's only 7am in the morning and you are already starting all of us on this depressing shit," Thailand scolded Indonesia, breaking the silence. Indonesia shrugged as he answered, "I'm just saying Thai." Thailand rolled his eyes, shaking his head.

The two began to bicker until Vietnam slammed her hands onto the table. "Okay quit it you two! Thai's right Indo. Stop being so depressing will you? It's all in the past," she addressed the two, her yellow eyes darkening–a bad sign. Indonesia grumbled something before shutting up. Thailand shared a look with Vietnam as unspoken words passed between them.

Silence enveloped our table once again until Brunei (the second youngest) shyly pointed out to me, "Abang Singa, Germany's coming in." I turned my head around as I saw the German walking in, his shoulders hunched. The dining hall, once filled with life, quietened down. Murmurs passed from students to students.

"He yelled yesterday, no?"

"Yea, to his roommate."

"What?! No way! Just what did that poor country do to incur his wrath."

"Rumours say Germany did it because he's just unstable."

"I wish he wasn't in this school."

Germany seemed to hear this as his posture became more hunched and he gait quickened. He hurried to grab some fruits before rushing out of the dining hall. I watched him scurry away and I felt a pang of hurt in my heart. *If I hadn't rushed this whole thing, he wouldn't be subjected to this extra torture from the others.* As Germany left the hall, voices returned as rumours flew between students. As I listened, I felt myself getting sicker and sicker. My breakfast suddenly wasn't so appetising. Getting up abruptly, shocking Mal, I muttered a quick goodbye before I left the dining hall.

Walking out into the hallway, I found my slight panic subsiding. Sighing, I decided to walk to class early. Just as I turned around the corner, I bumped into a tall figure. Cursing, I rubbed my head only to see...

"Prince Germany?!"

A/N: Yay! Another chapter! We are introduced to Singapore's POV and it was really fun to write it out. And if you wonder why Timor Leste isn't there, it's because he's too young for the school. He's brothers with Indonesia.

Also, only Malaysia is Singapore's blood brother. The others are adopted siblings.

Also, if you didn't know, Kaypoh simply is the Singaporean colloquial way of saying that a person is nosy.

*** (EDIT: (13 Nov 2024) Correction, previously Singapore and Malaysia's father was the Srivijaya Empire but upon further detailed readings, I realised I was wrong and it's supposed to be the Johor Sultanate. While the Srivijaya Empire did control Singapore at one point, I felt that the Johor Sultanate would be a better representation for the father of Malaysia and Singapore. That being said, this is also not 100% confirmed since Malaysia's history during the time of the Johor Sultanate actually included like 2 other powers but y'know since Singapore was under Johor Sultanate...**

I would highly suggest y'all to read up on the history if you want a clear understanding. I know this is just a story but I do want to try my best and stay true to as much of the history of the countries in this story and it's one of the reasons why I'm changing it. Honestly, Malaysia doesn't really have a specific "parent" considering many sultanates were fighting one another and stuff but y'know Johor Bahru is near Singapore so let's leave it as that. *Eli cries in sudden realisation that irl headcanons for the two countries might have to change*

But yea, that's my reason for the change.)

Forgive

[image]

"Prince Germany?!" Singapore spluttered as we stared at each other in shock. I smiled tentatively as I waved. Singapore's eyes widened even further as he took a few steps backwards. My smile dropped and Singapore's body tensed.

"I...I...I should go," the small country stammered as he hurriedly grabbed his satchel that had fallen. As he was about to walk away, I grabbed his arm. He turned around, a flash of anger in his ruby-coloured eyes. "What do you think you're doing?!" he tugged roughly, freeing himself. He wrapped his arms around him and was about to walk away. Panic seized me. If he left I might not get another chance to say sorry. It was now or never.

"I'm sorry!" I cried, making Singapore turn around in shock, "I'm so sorry, Singapore. I shouldn't have yelled at you like that. You aren't nosy at all." Singapore looked at me, his expressions going through a roulette of emotions. Confusion, anger, relief, they all made an appearance. My heart began beating faster as I nervously flicked my fingers against my thigh. *I'm such an idiot. Will he really forgive me? Me, Germany, the son of the worst man ever known to roam this land. Hah, this was stupid.* I bowed my head low and murmured, "I do not expect forgiveness. I understand–"

"Stop," Singapore interrupted, his voice firm. I shut my mouth immediately. He bit his lower lip and seemed to contemplate his next words. After what felt like forever, he said, "I forgive you and I'm sorry as well Germany. I...I was being too insensitive. I shouldn't have dove in and started asking you questions about your past. I apologise for the hurt I caused you to experience." I blinked, shocked. Why did he need to apologise? I was the one at fault here, not Singapore! My heart hammered wildly as Singapore looked at me with an expectant look in his eyes. *Am I supposed to reply that I forgive him? But it's my fault! What should I do?!* I felt my mind going

into meltdown mode as more and more thoughts kept piling on me.

"Hey, don't overthink it. We...we are both at fault here and I think now that we've both apologised we are even," Singapore broke through my thoughts. I blinked as a strange, foreign emotion swelled within my heart threatening to spill over. "I...I..." the words were held back as I suddenly felt my cheeks becoming wet. *I'm crying,* the realisation struck me hard in the chest. Singapore looked at me shocked as he asked if I was okay.

"Why? Why forgive me Singapore? No one ever has and you're the first. Why...why....why Singapore? Just why?" I choked out as the tears continued to fall.

"You know, our family doesn't define who we are. Just because your family were horrible people, it doesn't mean you are one either. And besides...I can tell that your kingdom has changed for the better," he answered. I let out a half laugh-sob as I rubbed away the tears. "Thank you...thank you Singapore for believing in me. And I'm sorry you had to see me crying," I was glad that the centre of my flag was red for it was hiding the embarrassed blush that had spread across my cheeks. Singapore smiled warmly and he nodded.

"It's fine, I see Mal and the others cry a lot and I don't think it's embarrassing. It's not good to bottle the emotions. At least that's what Pa–I mean Prof ASEAN says to us."

His words resonated with me. For a long time, after the war ended, I found myself bottling up my emotions, afraid that others would use them to their advantage. In the beginning, it was bad as I often would burst out in anger at others or randomly break down crying. But over time, I think it just became a part of me. Like a defensive mechanism. I learned to shut off most of my emotions besides anger, okay not really but I learnt not to show them on my face. I still felt the emotions but no one would ever know. Admittedly it wasn't the best since that probably drew more people away from me but I digress. This was probably the first time in a long time I had allowed someone to see such a vulnerable side of me.

"I see...Prof ASEAN is a wise teacher and father isn't he?" I chuckled, my heart feeling a little bit lighter. A fond smile spread across the

Singaporean's face as he nodded. Our sweet moment was interrupted just then by the bells chiming, a reminder that we needed to get to class. Bading a hurried goodbye, Singapore and I rushed off to our respective classrooms.

*

Stepping into class, I felt my heart sink. Not only were Japan and Italy not here, the others were whispering about me again. Russia was at the back, scowling away as per usual although today's scowl seemed deeper. America and Poland were deep into their dis–gossiping (could I really call talking about me badly a discussion?) although they stopped as I passed by them. Even then, I could feel Poland's wary gaze following me until I took a seat at the very back of the class, right in the corner of the room. A few other countries entered amongst them two of which were from the ASEAN group. The girls gave me a look before heading to their seats, discussing in low voices.

I bet they are all talking about my yelling last night. Why did I think that saying sorry to Singapore would solve it immediately? It obviously wouldn't. News travels fast for the bad stuff, not the good stuff. Russia gave me a long, hard look and I gulped as I averted my gaze. *Please don't say anything,* I prayed. A sigh, I looked up and saw that the Russian's scowl had softened into a bored gaze as he laid his head onto the table. Phew, crisis averted.

Click, click, click. The sound of high heels clicking against the ground caught our class's attention. All went silent as a lady walked into class. She had dark blue skin and had bright blue eyes that seemed to glow. Her hair, the same colour as her skin, was tied into a messy, yet pretty looking, bun. Placing her items on the teacher's desk, she turned to face us, grinning. "Hello everyone! I'm Ms NASA! That's N-A-S-A," she took out a piece of chalk as she proceeded to write her name onto the board before continuing, "I'll be your science and form class teacher for this year." America hooted cheerfully and Ms NASA gave him a small knowing smile.

"I don't know some of your names so let's just take the time now to introduce ourselves as I take attendance. Starting from...how about you right in front of me?" Ms NASA pointed to a boy dressed in a

grey woollen hat and white clothing. The boy stood to face us, his electric blue eyes surveying us. "I'm Finland, may we get along," he said before sitting back down. One by one, my classmates introduced themselves. When it reached Russia's turn, he stood up with a loud sigh. I caught his gaze and saw his mouth tilt down. "I'm Russia," he said before falling back onto his seat. America raised his eyebrow as he asked, "Got nothing else to say?" Russia's scowl returned back in full force and many students gulped and turned away.

"Нет, теперь закрой свою ловушку!" his voice was harsh and America rolled his eyes. When Russia and I were friends, I had picked up some Russian and I was *pretty* sure that he had asked the American to shut up. And judging by America's reaction, I believed that he too understood what Russia said.

"Alright you two, let's not fight on the first day of school please," Ms NASA chided the two. America clicked his tongue before turning to look at me, "How about you Germany? Got anything to say?" The class's attention was now on me. Looking down at my table, I muttered, "I'm Germany if America hasn't made that clear to you." Whispers ran through the class but other than that, nothing. I let out a small sigh of relief.

"All right kids! Now that we are done with the introductions, let's head to the hall for Principal UN's speech," Ms NASA clapped her hands together. Gathering our bags, we filed out of the classroom and headed down to the hall. I sighed loudly. This was going to be boring.

Translations:

Нет, теперь закрой свою ловушку: No now shut/close your trap!

Explanations

[image]

Principal UN's speech was nothing but plain boring. It was the usual: peace and harmony between students, be well rounded students, lead the world...blah blah blah. Honestly though? All the talk about peace and harmony was plain bullshit. It was everything but a dream. There would always be kingdoms wanting a larger piece of land, more power, more subjects, more materials. And if they couldn't get it easily...war would come. I learnt that very early on as a child.

"I'll be visiting some of the kingdoms in the following days so Vice-Principal Interpol will be in charge until my return," UN's statement made rippling murmurs through the crowd. It was rare for him to leave INTERPOL in charge and much rarer for him to go out on personal visits to the kingdoms. A student in the front raised their hand and after receiving permission from UN, asked, "Is there anything we should be worried about Principal UN? You normally do not visit kingdoms unless you require assistance."

UN's expression changed when he heard the question. But as soon as it appeared, it disappeared and was replaced by a calm and collected facade. "Of course not! There isn't anything wrong. I am only heading to the kingdoms to see if I can get more staff. Mr NATO has quite a bit on his hands already," UN's answer seemed to satisfy the student as they sat back down. "Any other questions?" he asked, looking about. There weren't any.

"Well then, you can all be dismissed. The rest of today will be a free day but the year 1s may want to start getting yourselves familiarised with the layout of the school. Other than that, there's nothing else. Have a good day everyone!"

We all rushed out of the hall as students split up into their respective cliques. Even the year 1s and already decided who would be whose friend and enemy. I sighed internally. No prizes for guessing which group I fell into on my first day here back when I

was a year 1. Not wanting to waste the rest of the day cooped in my room, I decided to head to the library.

I quickly walked past the students and all fell silent as I walked by. A few Year 1s were in front of me and when they saw me, their eyes widened as they scuttled to the side. Great. These people hardly knew me and they were already scared. *You kids really judge a book by its cover huh?* I really couldn't wait to graduate. Turning around the corner, I soon exited from the view of the staring eyes. My shoulders which had been tense the whole time finally relaxed as I let out a sigh. Allowing my posture to slump a bit, I began to climb to the library on the 2nd floor.

The library's peace and quiet was just what I needed after UN's speech. It was empty and devoid of life save for the librarian who was sitting quietly at her desk playing sudoku. Walking towards the fiction section, I quickly found a cosy corner next to a window and picked out a random crime thriller book. Once I was comfortable, I flipped open the book and allowed myself to be swept away into the fictional world.

*

I stayed in the library until it was almost dinnertime. If I had the choice, I would have continued to stay on but the librarian forced me to go. "You must eat Prince Germany," she insisted while ushering me out. I sighed and shot her a pleading look. She was not moved and forcefully pushed me out of my safe haven. "You can come back and read later when you finish eating. Now go," she urged me. Not wanting to fight with her, I nodded reluctantly and dragged myself to the dining hall.

The atmosphere in the dining hall was a complete 180 from the library. The boisterous sound of people talking rang in my ears as soon as I entered. After I took my food, I went to find my usual seat at the back of the dining hall. To my surprise, Singapore was there.

"Oh...I didn't realise you were here..." I trailed off, feeling uneasy. Why was he here? Did you need something from me? Or was he going to proclaim me as his enemy? Some students had done that before. Singapore smiled at me as he said, "I hope you don't mind

me sitting here. I...I just wanted to ask you some questions. If you don't mind of course!"

I blinked before answering hurriedly, "Of course not! Of course not." Singapore relaxed a little bit as I set down my tray. We lapsed into silence and I noticed a few countries looking at us with a questioning gaze. I kept my head down as I slowly ate my food.

"Why do you and Poland hate each other?"

The sudden question made me pause. Slowly setting down my fork, I tried to find a proper answer. Do I bullshit my way through it or tell him the truth? Or ignore him? *What's a good answer?* Opening my mouth, I shut it again. Singapore cocked his head as he looked at me. I felt sweat drip down my back as I struggled to answer the simple yet hard question.

Just be truthful, West advised me. Easy for her to say. She never had to personally deal with this. All she was was my conscience. *Germany's right. This boy's being too nosy! Ignore him,* East snapped back. I groaned internally. Why was I unable to answer?

"It's okay if you don't want to tell me," Singapore broke my train of thought. Shaking my head, I quickly blurted out, "No! I...I..." My voice trailed off again as I tried to come up with an excuse. A very sorry one that is. *Maybe I could say that he lost in a test–who am I kidding, everyone should have a pretty basic idea of why Poland hates me.*

"Does it have to do with the war?" Singapore asked cautiously. Miserably, I nodded. "Poland and I aren't exactly enemies. More of I'm *his* enemy. He hasn't forgiven me for what Vater did during the war," I smiled grimly, "But who can blame him? Vater did tear off his wings, the source of freedom. And I sort of played a part." Singapore looked at me in shock.

"You what?! How could you?!" he hissed loudly, rising from his seat. Raising my hands, I asked him to calm down. Begrudgingly, he sat back down, arms crossed. Slowly, I recounted that fateful day. When I was done, Singapore's face was paler. "Are you okay? Maybe I shouldn't have told you about this. I must have brought up some

trauma," I stopped myself from saying anything further, afraid to tip Singapore over the edge. After a brief silence, Singapore sighed and shook his head. "It's...no it's...fine. I just got reminded of some...things," he rubbed his wrist nervously. Things equating to whatever the hell J.E did during the war to him and Malaysia. I felt guilt weigh down heavily on me. We fell into a reflective kind of quiet before Singapore asked, "Have you ever tried to apologise to Poland?"

I let out a short and harsh sounding laugh, "You think I haven't tried? He *hates* me Singapore. The last thing he'd do is listen to the enemy!" Singapore sighed and muttered something under his breath. "Could you try again?" he asked and I shook my head furiously.

Singapore tried to ask again and I decided it was time to stand my ground. "Look, can you just stop? What's with you and getting me and Poland to be friends? Poland hates my guts and there is no way he'll ever accept my apology," irritation seeped through my tone, "I suggest that you stop trying to get us to be friends. All you'll do is get hurt in the long run both physically and mentally." Singapore gaped at me and I could see panic creeping up on him. Not wanting to deal with it any longer, I decided to leave.

"WAIT!" Singapore chased after me as I exited the dining hall. Students looked on curiously and I saw some people's hands exchanging money with one another. *Okay, seriously? Barely one day I've known this kid and people are already shipping me with him? What the frick is wrong with these people?* Stopping, I turned around and stared at the short country.

"Please, let me tell you something. I promise after this, we can put this whole questioning about Poland behind us," Singapore pleaded, eyes big as he clasped his hands together.

I stepped away from him, back turned. "Please! I swear I'm doing this for the greater good! Just let me explain please Germany!" desperation tinged Singapore's voice. I sighed softly, relenting as I turned to face him. I'll admit it, I was pretty curious with Singapore's statement.

"Fine, let's go back to the dorms and I'll see what you have to say."

A/N: Ah, more questions are arising. Who thinks the threat's going to be revealed to Germany?

Also, y'all can suggest better chapter titles because I seriously can't with them. Maybe I'll change them after this book is over but if you think the chapter titles can change, please tell me in the comments!

One last thing, I know of some...stuff has been going on Wattpad recently and frankly speaking, I'm just a kid here who wants to share their writing so I'm not going into a full rant. But just remember, STAY SAFE! If anything weird is going on, report it.
Let's try to make Wattpad a safe space for all.

再见哦！

Curiosity killed* me

[image]

After UN had finished his speech, America, Japan, Italy, South Korea, Canada and I decided to head to the courtyard area to play some football. Or soccer as America calls it. We parted ways to change into proper attire and reconverged.

*

"PASS THE BALL! PASS THE BALL!" America yelled as Italy evaded an attack by Canada. Italy kicked hard and the ball sailed above my head. I bemoaned my short height and could only watch as America dribbled the ball over to our goal. South Korea reached out but failed as the American prince scored. His teammates, Italy and Japan cheered as South Korea glumly picked the ball out of the makeshift goal. "C'mon Ame! Switch to my team! SK can go to yours. You've won too many times already!" Canada pleaded. America responded by sticking out his tongue, "Nuh uh! We picked the teams fair and square. Deal with it Nada, I'm the superior one in soccer." Canada made a face at that.

"If it were ice hockey Nada would totally win though!" I countered to which America sighed. "Ugh, don't remind me. I played against him during the holidays and he thrashed me completely," he groaned and shot a look at a smug looking Canada. Just then, I heard someone calling America.

" *'Merica, ¿te importa si nos unimos a ti?*" it was Argentina and behind her was Brazil and Mexico. I saw Canada's eyes light up as he waved happily to the Mexican. Japan, SK, Italy and I waved to the newcomers as America replied, "*Cosa segura!*" I think it meant...sure? My Spanish was poor considering hardly anyone in my kingdom spoke it. For America and Canada however, it was like second nature to them. Their kingdom was known for taking in many immigrants from other kingdoms searching for a better life. Over the years, school lessons had started to include learning several other languages to facilitate better communication between

immigrants and citizens.

Judging by the delight in Argentina's face, I could tell that she was pleased. Okay...so they were joining. Internally I groaned. These countries were known for being the best at soccer and I knew that I stood no chance. "One of you will be the ref I guess, since we need an even number of players," Brazil's voice snapped me out of my thoughts. "I'm beat already so I guess I'll be the referee," Japan said as she took a seat on the grassy ground. We agreed and sorted ourselves into teams: Argentina, Brazil, SK and America on one team, Canada, Italy, Mexico and me on the other. "Get ready to be thrashed," Argentina yelled to us. I groaned internally under my breath. My team was so done.

...I was right. The first match went horribly. Argentina and Brazil managed to score at least 5 goals together. My team only managed to score 1. "The winner is Argentina's team!" Japan announced and Italy shot her a glare.

"We know that already!" he snapped, crossing his arms. Japan merely shrugged. Just then, my stomach rumbled loudly. My face turned pink as the others looked at me. "Hungry amigo?" Mexico raised his eyebrow. Embarrassed, I nodded. My stomach growled as if to reaffirm my words. *Frick you stomach-*

"Well, I'm pretty beat already. Plus we *did* miss lunch. Maybe we can continue after a short break?" America suggested to which everyone agreed. With that, we sauntered off to the dining hall.

*

Since we were too full after our late lunch to play another game, we decided to head back to our rooms to rest. Walking back to my dorm, I chatted with America and Canada. "Who are your roommates by the way?" I asked them. "Well, both of us are sharing a room along with China," Canada answered as America sniffed. "The bastard is so irritating," he complained. Canada rolled his eyes and mouthed, "Don't listen to him." I giggled but stopped smiling when America asked how my "situation" was.

Sighing, I recounted the incident between Singapore and Germany.

When I finished, America's face contorted in disgust as he shook his head. "Ugh, I swear I'm going to kill him," America muttered as Canada nodded. I sighed again as I reached my room. "Whatever the case is, I'm still going to stay away from him so don't expect too much trouble," I answered.

"But if there is–"

"Poland will call you. We get it Ame, now come on," Canada tugged on his twin's arm. Bading me goodbye, the American and Canadian walked away. I watched them disappear into one of the rooms further away before dragging my feet to enter my dorm.

Luckily for me, no one was in the dorm so I had the whole place to myself. I decided to shower and change out of my football attire first before I unpacked my stuff further. When I was done with all of that, I laid on my bed, feeling the cool sheets ripple under my skin. My eyelids fluttered open and shut as I let out a yawn. *Just one minute...*

I must have fallen asleep at some point because the next thing I knew, the chimes for the dinner bell were ringing. "Ugh," I groaned as I sat up, my body protesting loudly at the movement. Darkness enveloped the room and I felt a sense of panic grip me. Fumbling wildly for the light switch, I knocked over several belongings and I heard the tell-tale sign of glass shattering. *Shit, the frame–* Light flooded the room and I winced as my corneas were burned. When my poor eyes had finally adjusted, I began to survey the damage.

Bending down, I carefully picked up the broken frame from the broken pile of glass. When I flipped it over, I was relieved to see the picture intact. If it was torn, I'd be devastated. Setting the broken frame on the desk, I went to grab the bin under the desk as I carefully swept up the glass shards. When I was done, I hurriedly placed everything back into their places. I'd have to remember to get a new frame soon.

*

As I entered the dining hall, I saw SK's hand waving me over to their table. Nodding, I went to grab my food before heading over.

"You're late," Japan commented. I sheepishly smiled and explained that I had fallen asleep. "Ahhhh," the table collectively nodded. "You're going to have a hell of a time sleeping man," Canada remarked to which I groaned.

"Ugh, don't remind me."

We continued to chat a while longer when suddenly a familiar voice yelled, "WAIT!" I turned around and saw Singapore chasing after Germany. America raised his eyebrow as Japan cursed, "地獄?! なぜ彼らはお金を交換するのですか?!" America's face turned concerned as he shook his head disapprovingly. I decided that I didn't want to know what Japan had said after that. It was obviously not good.

Singapore chased Germany out of the dining hall and soon, rumours were flying about. "Do you think they're dating?!" some of the younger students asked excitedly. Our table collectively rolled our eyes when we heard that. "Seriously, what the heck is wrong with people these days?" Canada sighed, "Besides, didn't Germany yell at Singapore? Why the heck would this–never mind..." SK nodded as he added, "People don't think these days do they?"

"No, no they don't," I sighed.

The table fell silent after that. Unable to stand the quiet, I decided to leave much to the dismay of the other countries. "Sorry guys, my social battery is tanked for the day. See you tomorrow?" SK reluctantly nodded as the others slowly followed him. Waving goodbye, I grabbed my tray before dumping it away as I headed back to my dorm.

Germany's room door was ajar and I could hear hushed voices coming from it. At first I wanted to ignore it but curiosity got the better of me. You know the phrase: Curiosity kills the cat? This situation was a perfect example.

Sneaking closer to the room, I leaned against the wall near the door as I peered into the room. Singapore was standing in the centre of the room while Germany sat on his bed. "And what is this threat exactly Singapore?" Germany asked, arms crossed, violet eyes flashing. Singapore ran his hands through his hair as he let out a

sound of frustration.

"I don't know! UN won't tell me at all but all I know is that it's affecting you and Poland's kingdoms!"

Huh? What was it about a threat against my kingdom? Was Germany– "And because of this...threat, you want to make Poland my friend?" Germany's tone was doubtful. *What?* Singapore nodded as he replied, "If you do, UN believes the threat can be removed."

There was silence. After a second, I heard Germany's reply. "I don't like forced friendships Singapore. I'm sorry, but you can't force me and Poland to be friends. Not after what happened between us," his voice was soft yet firm. Singapore's shoulders slumped as he sighed.

"I hope this doesn't ruin our relationship..." Germany asked. I presumed Singapore shook his head since Germany's sigh sounded relieved. *Bang!* My eyes widened as my hand slipped and pushed the room door wide open. I fell to the ground as Singapore and Germany stared at me in horror.

"Po...Poland? What are you doing here?" Singapore's voice had changed and I couldn't really make out what he was saying. "I..." the words wouldn't come out. Germany's eyes narrowed as he asked me warily, "You were eavesdropping the whole time weren't you?"

"Yes, but so what if I did? I think this concerns me no? What threat is there huh, are you planning something? I wouldn't put it behind you to do so you–"

"Stop," Germany's fists were clenched tightly, his yellow skin turning paler and paler, "Just...stop...I don't want to hurt you..." I should have kept my mouth shut but did I? No. Instead, I continued, "You don't want to hurt me? Have you forgotten what you did in the war? You caused me to lose my wings! Ha, and you say that you don't want to hurt me? You're delusional Germany. Face it, you are a murderer and I think you should have died along with your father!"

Wait...was it me or did the room seem darker? I had roughly half a second to ponder my answer before I felt a sharp pain in my chest.

Through a blur of tears, I saw the German prince, bent over as shadows poured out from his hands. Singapore was lying on the ground, unconscious. The pain was overwhelming–both physically and mentally. The haunted laughter of TR played in my mind as my back burned with pain. Laboured breaths came out as I began to slowly lose consciousness. The great oblivion washed over me just as it became all too much and I gratefully allowed myself to be swept away. The last thing I remember was thinking, *Curiosity kills the cat.* Then numbness.

Translations:

'Merica, ¿te importa si nos unimos a ti?--'Merica, do you mind if we join you?

Cosa segura!--Sure thing!

地獄?! なぜ彼らはお金を交換するのですか?!--The hell?! Why would they exchange money?!

A/N: Whoo, another chapter! Here's more Pol and Ger interaction. Hmmm...I hope Poland doesn't die...

Also, the reason why Poland can't understand Singapore is because Singapore's accent began to poke through. It only comes through when he's with the ASEAN gang or he's nervous. He speaks pretty well though (haha, Britain helped him [I mean historically in a way but also not really.])

To all Singaporeans reading this, I hope this doesn't offend you...it's just that I know sometimes other people from other countries (esp. not Asia) don't understand sometimes.

Also, to Singaporeans reading this, while I was searching up the country's history, I learnt about Raffles and Faquhar (I butchered that spelling but I dun care rn. It's 10.45 pm and I want to sleep.) and when I went to check the Singapore tags here on Wattpad...I found...

Raffles x Faquhar (Faffles) fanfiction.
Now that's messed up. Really messed up. I'm sorry to whoever wrote them fan fics but no. Just no. That's messed up on so many levels.

Okay, bye now. Also, anyone wants to have any more character sheets for other characters in Bbd? (bound by destiny) Comment them will ya? See you soon. :)

Questioning

[image]

My patience was already extremely thin after Singapore's questioning and Poland was not helping me. "...you should have died along with your father!" I snapped at those words. Fury consumed my being and everything disappeared in a blurry rage. Part of me was vaguely aware that I was harming both Poland and Singapore with my ability but other than that, everything else was numb. I don't know how I raged for but the next thing I knew, UN, Prof. EU and Prof. ASEAN were in my room as UN used his ability on me. My body fell to the ground like lead as my senses slowly returned. *Oh mein...what have I done?* I wanted to say something but my body was so very very tired...my eyelids fell shut as I fell into oblivion.

*

"You should go kill yourself!"

*"F**king hypocrite!"*

"You and your father are the same!"

*"Germany? More like N***!"*

"You're starting another war aren't you?"

"You should have died along with your father!"

"NO!" I screamed, my eyes snapping wide open and I was greeted by the white ceiling of the infirmary. UN who was sitting next to me, half asleep, jolted awake and nearly fell out of his chair. "Huh?! Wha...what happened?!" he whipped his head around frantically. His gaze finally settled onto me and I saw him relax. "Ah, you're awake," he smiled, except it didn't fully reach his eyes, "Do you

remember what happened Germany?"

I blinked and then everything came back to me. "Oh mein...are the two okay?" I asked, panicky, as I shot up in the bed. UN tsked before admitting, "Singapore's awake now but...Poland he's...he's still unconscious." A wave of guilt coursed through me. If Poland died...I would never forgive myself. *Why did I have to lose control?* UN looked at me before lightly clearing his throat. "I know now is probably not a good time to explain your punishment but I have to," he explained before continuing, "Your power is one of the more volatile ones and for the cause of harm to others, you will be barred from using your ability outside of training until further notice."

When he was done, he brought out two golden bands. Despite how harmless they looked, I knew that they were imbued with an ability nullification spell. Dismay must have shown on my face for UN gave me a sympathetic smile. It didn't help at all. Just then, Prof. EU and ASEAN entered. Prof. ASEAN was glaring at me and I shrunk in my seat. It was no surprise that he was angry. In fact, I fully expected UN and Prof. EU to leave so that Prof. ASEAN could give me a piece of his mind. Afterall, adopted or not, Singapore was still his son and he didn't take lightly to people messing up his children.

"Placing the restrictors now UN?" EU asked , earning a nod from the principal.

"Arms out Germany," UN instructed. Reluctantly, I held out both arms as UN clicked the restrictors on my wrist. I felt my ability stagnate almost immediately. Stepping back, UN nodded to ASEAN who came to take his place. "Could we have some privacy please?" he asked, and I felt fear seep into my bones. *What is he going to do to me? Kill me?* The two adults left and soon, I was alone with ASEAN. He looked at me and I couldn't help but feel akin to a maths equation or puzzle that ASEAN wished to solve. Maybe I was. Many of my schoolmates found me mysterious since I wasn't very expressive and kept to myself most of the time unless spoken to.

After a few minutes, ASEAN began to talk. "You could have killed Singapore and Poland, you know?" he started off. I nodded, guilt gnawing at my heart. I was the embodiment of shadows and my

power was one of the stronger yet volatile ones in the academy. It was volatile because I refused to learn how to actually harness it and rather kept much of my ability repressed. I feared that if I knew how to use my ability properly, I'd only cause harm. The only thing I was actually good at was thinning shadows or using them to cloak me. Perhaps it was a physical manifestation of my wish to hide away. Maybe. Other than that, the rest of whatever my ability could do was left to my suppressed emotions to deal with. That basically meant if my emotions spiralled out of control, my ability would also flare to life and bring along destruction. Which is basically what happened.

"What happened exactly? Singapore refuses to tell me. Did you do something to him?" ASEAN's last statement held an accusatory tone.

I let out a sigh before saying, "I didn't do anything apart from well whatever my ability caused. And he was talking to me about why he needed me and Poland to be friends. And then Poland came in and then he...he...said stuff...and I snapped." ASEAN's eyes narrowed as he asked me to explain further. "Some threat, he said UN didn't specify," I mumbled. There was silence as ASEAN ran his hands through his hair. *Did I say something wrong?*

"ฉันบอกเด็กว่าอย่าพูดอะไรเลย..." I heard him mutter. ASEAN shook his head before returning his now troubled gaze on me. "Does Poland know?" he asked, tone commanding. I nodded and ASEAN sighed loudly. "Promise me you will not tell anyone else. This is highly classified information and UN is going to kill me if other countries find out. It's bad enough that I told my so-Singapore and now you two also know," he groaned. I nodded. It wasn't as if I had anyone to tell anyways.

Sighing, ASEAN stood up to take his leave. "You will resume lessons later in the afternoon. It's still early so get some more rest if you can," he told me before exiting. I blinked. That was it? Huh, I'd expect him to yell at me like a madman. Flopping back onto the bed, I spied a clock next to my bed and I grabbed it. It read: 4.30am. I sighed as I shut my eyes hoping to get more rest.

It never came.

When the alarm rang, I slammed my hand down as I slowly got out of the bed. My body creaked like an old man and I made a face. Shuffling out of the private room, I was greeted by a darkened lobby. Just then, I saw movement. I froze. "Who's there?" I called out nervously. A light clicked on and I saw a bedraggled Singapore. We stared at each other before Singapore made a squeak and ran off. I sighed loudly. *Just great. Just great. He's scared of me now.* I stood there, alone in the brightened room, almost as if in a trance.

Are you gonna apologise or stand here? Great, the voices were back. Could my first week back at school get any worse?

Translations:

Oh mein: Oh my...

ฉันบอกเด็กว่าอย่าพูดอะไรเลย... *:* I told the child not to say anything...

A/N: Another week and another chapter! For those who are wondering what language ASEAN is speaking, it's Thai. I chose Thai because ASEAN was formed in Bangkok, Thailand, so I thought that this would be fitting. Thai is ASEAN's second language aside from English and he often uses it so most of his children can't understand what he's saying. He speaks, all the official languages of the ASEAN countries.

Now...I'm starting CHAPTER QUESTIONS!!!
STARTING OF...

1) What should ASEAN's ability be?

2) Who is your favourite character so far?

I really want to draw all the organisations as one of those: "Meet our staff!" photos buttttt I think I'm going to die drawing...1, 2, 3, 4, 5....8 main organisations from the story. We'll see if I can find motivation.

Anyways, see you soon! Ciao!

Awake and alive

[image]

TR towered over me and my father, blade in one hand, whip in another. He wore a crazed smile, eyes wide as he circled us, like a hawk watching its prey. Without warning, he swung his left arm as a stinging pain burned my body. Tears clouded my eyes as I was whipped over and over again. "Please stop..." I whimpered which only earned me harsher whips.

"STOP ALREADY! I BEG YOU!" Papa pleaded. I nearly cried in relief as TR stopped whipping me. But to my horror, he simply strode over to Papa and roughly grabbed Papa by the chin. "Can't bear to watch your boy be tortured hmmm? I was saving this for him but if you insist..." without warning, TR whipped Papa before using his knife and digging it into Papa's left eye.

*"Aughhhhh–" TR, that...that motherf***er, he threw Papa down onto the ground. TR clutched Papa's eyeball in his hand and I nearly threw up if it wasn't for the fact that I was sobbing hysterically. "Stop it! Stop it! Stop it already!" I cried, choking on my saliva. TR threw the eyeball onto the ground and it rolled to hell knows where. There was a shriek as I looked up to see a young boy dressed in a black shirt and shorts–he must have been about 5 years old.*

"Vati..." the boy looked on, eyes wide.

"Ja, Deutschland?" TR asked. Ah, so this was the Prince of Darkness. Germany said something in German to which TR chuckled. " ***Oh du süßes, unschuldiges Ding, Deutschland. Sehen Sie, diese Leute sind sehr böse –*** *"*

"LIES! YOU'RE THE EVIL ONE! GERMANY PLEASE–OWW!" Papa was cut off as TR sank his bloody knife into Papa's thigh. He warned that if Papa were to say something again, my wings would be off my back. Horror filled me. My wings...no, they couldn't be gone! How would I fly? Papa's wings had been ripped out already and his back was stained with blood. I was surprised that he was even conscious. Germany's eyes

widened and I shot him a pleading look. All he did was turn away. How dare he–

TR continued, "These people are very evil, that's why Vati needs to punish them." My rage boiled over and I yelled, "LIAR! GERMANY YOU CAN–" TR slapped me–hard–and I fell to the ground as the monster began to kick me, each blow harder than the last. I shut my eyes as I tried to endure the pain. A childlike laughter rang in my ears and I felt even angrier. How could that German prince laugh at other's suffering? A part of me knew that I was going insane but I paid it no mind. I felt TR flip me onto my back and I sighed in relief, thinking the attack was over. I was wrong.

My eyes shot open as I felt the knife sink into my back. It felt like I was on fire and burning. I could hear the sound of cartilage and muscles being ripped apart as half of my wings fell to the ground. My vision blurred. It was so painful. It was as if I was dunked in lava and taken out.

I vaguely remember Germany coming over and Papa begging to spare me. I let out a low and husky chuckle. I was going to die. Haha, there were so many things I...

PAIN! IT RUSHED THROUGH ME, AS MUSCLES AND CARTILAGE WERE CUT FROM MY BODY. PAIN! And then...nothing. I was falling through oblivion–sweet, sweet, sweet oblivion. My torture had finally ended.

*

I woke up, arms flailing about, gasping for breath as tears streamed down my face. Prof. EU who was sitting in his seat calmly got up as he placed a hand on my shoulder. "Calm down Poland, calm down. You're safe here," he said. Slowly, with more encouraging words, my tears receded and my gasps turned into hiccups. With EU's assistance, I managed to sit up, groaning at the pain it caused me.

"Do you need some painkillers Poland? I can get Red Cross or Crescent," he asked gently. I shook my head, "I've...had worse." EU's eyes darkened when I said that but didn't comment. Just then, Prof. ASEAN came in. His eyes lit up as a relieved smile crossed his face.

The two professors conversed in low voices before ASEAN took EU's seat.

"How are you feeling?" he asked, voice warm. "Does feeling like I just emerged from hell count as a feeling?" I asked, eyebrow raised. ASEAN smiled sympathetically as he patted my back. "Do you want to talk about it?" I shook my head. He nodded and asked me if I had any questions.

"How long was I out?"

"About a day. You're exempted from lessons for today so don't worry. If you don't feel well enough, we can exempt you from the training sessions until next week."

I shook my head and told him that I was fine. He nodded as he stood up. "Well, your friends are here now. They want to meet you, are you up for some visiting?" ASEAN tilted his head to the side. A small smile flitted across my face and I eagerly nodded. He nodded and called for my friends to come in. The door opened as America, Canada, Czechia and SK entered. "POLAND!" they screamed in unison.

"Hey guys."

"What do you mean 'Hey guys'?! Do you know how worried I was?!" Czechia screamed hysterically. America nodded as he leaned against the wall, "I swear that when I find that asshole, I am going to kill him." A dangerous–almost manically–gleam flashed in the American's eyes but as soon as it appeared, it disappeared. SK sighed as he asked me if I felt okay.

"I mean apart from relieving *that* incident, I feel...well enough," a sombre atmosphere filled the room as everyone exchanged looks with one another. They knew what '*that*' meant. Especially America and Canada since their family was the one who managed to save Papa and I from TR's grasps. I shuddered as I thought about what would have happened if I didn't get saved. Maybe I wouldn't be here today. *Stop thinking about that Polska!* I shook my head wildly.

Canada clapped his hands together as he brought our attention back

to the present. "How long will you be away from lessons?" he asked. "Just for today, although if I don't feel well enough, I might not join training for this week," I answered. Canada nodded understandingly and told me to rest well. We chatted for a while more before Nurse WHO came in. "Ah, your awake Poland. I'm sorry I couldn't come earlier. The village nearby needed my assistance," she bowed deeply and I waved my hand.

"No worries Nurse WHO. I understand." She sighed in relief as she whipped out a chart. I smiled internally. WHO was the school nurse and despite her grumpy expression, once you got to know her, she was a pretty kind person. Just don't burn yourself 5 times in a week and she's cool. (Yes America, I'm looking at you.) She also occasionally headed out of school to help some of the poorer people living in the villages scattered about Pangea. It was a noble job and I admired her for it.

"Alright Poland, please answer these questions honestly. 1) Are you feeling any pain?" I shook my head. WHO nodded and noted it down.

"Any discomfort in the back?"

"Nope."

WHO asked me a few more questions before keeping the chart away. "Hmmm, you seem healthy enough but can I do a physical examination please?" she asked kindly. I bit my lower lip but nodded. WHO smiled reassuringly at me as she ushered the others out. After that, she instructed me to take out my shirt. Hesitantly, I unbuttoned the shirt and slipped out of it. A cold draft of air brushed past my back and I shivered involuntarily. I could feel WHO's gaze on my back and suddenly felt very self conscious of the two long jagged scars on my back. They were reminders of what TR had done to me. How he had stolen away my childhood innocence and freedom.

I felt WHO touching the scars and I flinched. "Is there something hurting Poland?" she asked worriedly. I shook my head and she continued her examination. When she was done, she nodded and told me that I could re-wear my shirt. I sighed gratefully as I

hurriedly put on the shirt.

"Well, you seem fine so I think you can head back to the dorms. But before I let you go, I need to give you some warnings. The effects of Germany's ability is going to stick for a while longer–if you are lucky, it should clear within the week. During this time, you might experience nightmares. I'll be prescribing some sedatives for you which you can eat in case you have difficulty sleeping. However, I can't say that the sedatives will stop the nightmares. It's science versus ability and you know how that works," WHO explained. I nodded in understanding. After going through some more things, WHO gave me the all clear to return back to my dorm.

"You can come back if you require more assistance. Red Cross and Red Crescent will be here to help if I'm not around."

"Thanks Nurse WHO."

"Anytime Poland. Anytime."

Translations:

Oh du süßes, unschuldiges Ding, Deutschland. Sehen Sie, diese Leute sind sehr böse: Oh you sweet, innocent thing, Germany. You see, these people are very evil

A/N: I have nth much to say except for...

Have "official" drawings for EU and UN in this story (I also posted it in my Art book)

[image]

[image]

Questions of the chapter:

1) Did Germany actually laugh at Poland or was it a hallucination? And if Germany did laugh, does he not remember or did he purposely omit it out in his chapter "Reminders of his past"?

2) Would you like to have a small Q and A session when this book reaches 1K?

Hehe, I'm having so much pain writing this. Also, who is a character that you *really* want to see as a drawing?

Alrighty, goodbye and see you when I return. *proceeds to pop out of existence unlike Pomni in TADC (the amazing digital circus)*

The start of the aftermath

[image]

"*Doitsu*!" I turned around, sighing as I saw Japan running up to me. Great. Just great. *Can everyone stop pestering me?* I slowed down as Japan caught up. "What did you do to Poland and Singapore? In all the time I've known you, you've never harmed anyone with your ability. What changed?" she asked me. I sighed and shook my head.

"I don't want to talk about it."

"Everyone's gossiping. They're calling you a monster. Don't you want someone to know the truth?"

"No. Besides, what the hell is the use? Anyways, I don't care what they say. They're right. I *am* a monster," I muttered bitterly. Japan shook her head disapprovingly as she tutted.

"That's not the attitude to have."

"You'd do the same if you were in my shoes."

"I wouldn't," Japan said but both of us knew that she was lying. When you are the child of an evil brute, the last thing you do when you are "in the wrong" is to tell your side of the story. No one cares. All it does for you is make others think you are trying to make excuses and offset the blame. You stay quiet and accept the blows and pray that it ends soon. Silence enveloped the two of us. I was about to leave when suddenly, I heard a booming voice. America. I groaned internally. He was the person I'd been trying to avoid the most. Knowing his relationship with Poland, I highly doubted that he was here to have a friendly chat.

"Ah, I've been looking for you Prince Germany," America flashed a smile and I averted my gaze. "I...I need to get to class," I muttered hurriedly. He strode over as Japan looked on, confused. He placed his hand on my shoulder and my body tensed up. "Same here Ger. We can have our talk as we walk to class," America cheerily

answered, eyes curving into crescents. I gulped but nodded. Japan shot me an apologetic look, mouthing 'Good luck'. Judging by the sweetness in America's voice, I sensed that I was going to need more than just good luck.

America kept smiling until we turned around the corner. As soon as we entered the isolated hallway, his cheery facade dropped. He frowned heavily, standing in front of me. Despite being only slightly taller than me, I couldn't help but feel like a dwarf next to him. A shadow passed over his face and I swore that his eyes turned red.

"I heard you harmed Poland," America's voice was low.

"I'm sorry for hurting him."

"Are you really sorry? Maybe you harmed Poland because you want to finish what your father did. Or maybe you want to get back into Russia's good graces. I wouldn't put it past you, y'know?" America's tone was taunting and I felt my anger rise. Swallowing, I gritted out, "Russia *hates* me. I don't think what I did will get me into his nice list again. And I *would never* harm another person just to finish what my father was doing during the war."

America scoffed and shook his head. "Whatever the case is, I don't want you near Poland, you hear me? Otherwise, I'll make sure that restrictions on your ability aren't the only thing you'll get," he hissed the last bit before turning away. I stood there, dumbstruck for a few minutes until the bell rang.

"Shit, I'm going to be late for class!"

*

I skidded into class just as Prof. EU greeted the class. He nodded as I greeted him breathlessly. "Go sit next to Russia. Today's pair work," he told me. I sighed loudly but dragged myself over to the back. Russia looked bored as I set my books down. Prof. EU began his lesson as he began to talk about the first Great War. I sighed, leaning my head against the table. I swore that history classes were designed to publicly humiliate me. If I had the choice, I'd prefer not to join the class at all. At least the others wouldn't shoot me dirty

looks and whisper amongst themselves.

"Now for the rest of this class, please fill in the worksheet that's being passed down with your partner. Let's see how many of you were listening attentively," Prof. EU concluded. We received a copy of the worksheet and Russia scribbled our names onto the worksheet. "What was the major cause of the first Great War?" he read out the question. Sighing, I recited the passage from the textbook and took out my pen.

"I'll write."

"Sure. You have the nicer handwriting anyways."

I wrote the answer out as Russia read through the next question. When I was done writing, he gave me the answer to the second question. We continued like this and within 15 minutes, we managed to finish the worksheet. Russia raised his hand and Prof. EU came by to collect the worksheet. Prof. EU scanned the worksheet and nodded approvingly. "Good job you two. I wasn't expecting you to finish first. You can pack up and leave first," he beamed. My classmates looked up from their worksheets as they yelled, "No fair! When we are done can we also leave?" He rolled his eyes as he told them to hurry up. They grumbled but nodded grudgingly as they returned to their work with renewed vigour. I hurriedly stuffed my books into my satchel before rushing out of the class.

"Hey, *Germaniya,* can I talk to you?" I spun around and stared in astonishment at a gently smiling Russia.

"What do you want to talk about?" I croaked out.

"I can't talk to an old friend?"

"You labelled me as an enemy."

Russia scoffed and rolled his eyes. "I was immature and young," he threw the words out carelessly and I found my defences coming up. Russia was not one to simply say, "You aren't my enemy anymore". You needed to gain a lot of trust from him and if you were a

previous enemy, you needed to get the Tsar's approval. "What do you want Russia?" I looked at him, my shoulders sagging. Russia's smile fell as his eyes hardened.

"Why did you harm Poland and Singapore?"

I looked at him before bursting into laughter. "Why would I tell you? For all I know, you're collecting blackmail for your father." Russia crossed his arms as he glared at me. "I'm not. I'm really curious," he said. I scoffed and let out a harsh laugh. "Russia, we haven't talked since Year 3! How do you expect me to trust you? Besides, I'm a f**king hypocrite remember? If I remember correctly, you *hate* these people," I spat out. Hurt flashed across Russia's face, just for a split second though, then his icy scowl came back.

"People change."

"If you truly believed in that, then you would have reached out to me aeons ago."

Russia stayed silent and I knew his next answer.

Father wouldn't allow me.

"Father wouldn't allow me."

Of course. Everything had to be run through Daddy Dearest. My lips curled inwards and I was highly aware that my expression screamed hostility. Russia looked downwards as if debating if continuing this conversation was worth it. I already knew my answer. Turning around, I told the Russian, "Please don't talk to me about this anymore. The hatred doesn't need to be mutual." Then, I left for my next class.

A/N: Hopefully this chapter didn't have too much dialogue. I'm glad I managed to post this before CNY starts so 1 point to Eli! *cheers* I can't decide if it's bad that I somehow write these chapters in a few days or is it good. My teacher wouldn't approve though I suspect.

Question time!

1) Do you think there is any point in Russia's statement, " Sure. You have the nicer handwriting anyways."**? If so, why did he say that?**

2) Why is Germany's attitude so much (kinda) bolder when he's with Russia?

3) Writers (non writers y'all can still answer), do you plan out your stories? If so, how and roughly how many words on average are in the planning document (for those who do it digitally. For handwritten, roughly how many pages?)

All right, that's all for today! Happy Chinese/Lunar New Year to all my readers who celebrate it and I wish you a prosperous Dragon Year ahead! 万事如意，学业进步! (I pray that the first phrase is correct. And to all the students on this website, good luck in your studies!)

Confrontation

[image]

Schlaf ein, schlaf ein, schlaf ein

Du gähnst schon, komm, kuschel dich ein

Ich sing dir noch ein Lied

Ich freu mich so, dass es dich gibt

Ich wünsch dir eine gute Nacht

Wir sehen uns, wenn wieder die Sonne lacht

Schlaf ein, schlaf ein, schlaf ein

Wir lieben dich, schlaf jetzt ein

Wir lieben dich, schlaf jetzt ein

Schlaf ein, schlaf ein, schlaf ein...

.

.

.

"...huh?" I blinked sleepily as I slowly got up from the bed. Sun streamed in from the window and all was silent. A quick check of the clock on my bedside table told me that it was 8am, Saturday. "What was that dream about?" I muttered, stretching my back. The melody haunted me but as I went about my morning routine, its tune began to fade from my memory. I didn't mind, it wasn't *that* important anyways.

*

I ate breakfast with the gang as per normal and we joked about. The unease and tension I had been feeling slowly dissipated. But it came back with full force when a dark and icy aura fell on the table. Looking up, I saw a tall country, hands behind his back wearing a ushanka. Russia. My eyes narrowed as he motioned for NK to follow him. SK looked on wearily as his brother smiled–one of the rare times he did–as NK got up from his seat. Russia whispered something and NK nodded before running off. America clutched his glass tightly as Canada's kind gaze darkened. "*Польша*, can I talk to you for a moment? Privately," he added the last bit in a hurry, his grey eyes shifting over to look at the Brittianna twins. America drained his glass of apple juice as he slammed the cup on the table.

"What do you want with Poland?" he asked, eyes sharpening at Russia.

"Can't I just talk to a fellow classmate *Америка*?"

"Whatever you want to say, you can say it here," America retorted. Russia's eyes sharpened and he drew himself to his full height. America stood up, hands on the table as he glared at Russia. Canada pursed his lips but said nothing. I did notice however, he tugged on the hem of America's shirt as a warning. Of course, his brother paid that no mind. Ukraine sat still, her head downwards and from where I was seated, I could see her hands were balled into fists. SK, Japan and Italy averted their eyes as they continued to eat.

"I'll go. Let's go Russia," America looked at me incredulously and I shot him a look. He slumped but nodded. "Fine, but if you do anything funny, I'll make sure you'll have your ass beaten!" he warned. Russia snorted, rolling his eyes as he muttered, "Whatever. Come *Польша*."

We walked out of the dining hall as students stared at us, whispering. We walked a little bit more before Russia guided me to an empty hallway. He studied me for a moment and I crossed my arms. "What do you want to talk about?"

"I want to know what happened between you and Germany.

Knowing the boy, he'd never harm anyone unless provoked. Did you do something to provoke him?"

I stared at the Russian, mouth agape. How could he throw out a random accusation like this? Who did he think he was? The police? Russia stared at me, waiting for an answer as I squirmed. "Well? What are you waiting for? A red carpet?" he asked after a while. I glared and shook my head as I said, "This is confidential. I can't tell you."

"Then why does America know?"

My eyes widened as I stuttered, "Wh...wha...what?" Russia's eyes widened ever so slightly as a sickening grin spread across his face. If it wasn't for the shock I was feeling, I would most likely be quaking with fear. "Yes, **Китай** overheard the twins talking about this yesterday in the library and he told me about it over dinner," Russia leaned closer towards me, a glint in his grey eyes, "So tell me Poland, what happened between you and Germany hmm?" I took a step back as my eyes shifted over to the window behind Russia. I gulped, hopefully leaving this place wouldn't require me to put up a fight. "Why don't you tell me what you already know? That way I won't have to repeat myself," I suggested as the Russian shook his head. My eyes narrowed as I tried again. Still he rejected.

"You might try to lie and we can't have that now can we?"

I gritted my teeth, silently cursing at Russia. I had to admit that he was good at reading people. Too good in fact. It was a skill he got from the Tsar after spending years with him.

"Why do you even want to know what happened between me and Prince Germany? It's not like it concerns you."

"Oh but it does. Germany's my friend and I fully intend to find out the truth to clear the charges."

I glared at him as Russia smirked. "So what will it be? Will you tell me now Poland?" he leaned closer. He slowly backed me into the corner and I began to panic. Suddenly, he slammed his hands next to the wall behind me. I was trapped. "Let me go..." I whispered and

Russia grinned sadistically. "Not until you tell me the truth, Poland," he said, his once lifeless grey eyes brightening.

"OI! What do you think you're doing *Росія!*" it was Ukraine! Russia turned around, his eyes returning back to their lifeless state. "**Что ты здесь делаешь**?" he snarled at his sibling. Ukraine flipped her braid as she shot back, "**Я мог бы спросить тебя о том же**!" Russia rolled his eyes as he flashed me a creepy smile. "Poland and I were just having a talk. That's all, right *Polska*?" I shivered at the use of my name in my native tongue as I shook my head. Russia's gaze visibly darkened as he gnashed his teeth. Ukraine glared at her brother as she called for me to follow her. "America's looking for you," Ukraine held her hand out and I gladly took it as she dragged me away. As we walked away, I saw Russia glaring at me, fists clenched as a shadow casted over his eyes. He slowly receded into the shadows and I shivered.

"Are you okay Poland?" I turned to face a concerned Ukraine.

I nodded and thanked her. "No problem. I'll be going now, Ame is still in the dining hall with Nada so you can head there," she smiled before rushing off. *I didn't even say goodbye...* There was undeniably some tension between me and Ukraine stemming from the fact that Papa had decided to block some of the exports coming from the Kingdom of Winter due to some issues with Tsar Soviet. What the issues were was something I did not know. Papa wouldn't tell me. Despite Ukraine's pleading for me to help out negotiations, I knew I couldn't. I wasn't in rule and my words would mean nothing. She got pretty mad at me but she mellowed out after...2 months? Even then, tension still lingered.

If only I could get our friendship back on track again.

Translations:

Польша--Poland

Америка--America

Китай--China

Росія--Russia

Что ты здесь делаешь--What are you doing here

Я мог бы спросить тебя о том же--I could ask you the same thing

Song lyric translation:

Sleep, sleep, sleep

You already yawn, come, cuddle up

I'll sing another songI'm looking forward to giving you

I wish you a good night

See you when the sun laughs again

Sleep, sleep, sleep We love you, sleep now

We love you, sleep now

Sleep, sleep, sleep

A/N: The song is called Schlaf ein, and it is a German lullaby. It sounds so soothing and I thought it'd be something intresting to add. Song at the bottom.

https://youtu.be/8r2AWN1_BAY

Question time!

1) Was the German lullaby a dream or was it real?

2) What is one real world recent event shown in this chapter? Clue: Ukraine

3) Who wants a special QnA session when BbD hits 1K reads?

Aight, that's all from me for today. See you soon!

Late night talks

[image]

I woke up to the same tortured screams. It was Poland and I had no doubt that he was experiencing another nightmare. Two weeks had passed since the incident and yet the signs of my ability's side effects had yet to wane. Which was strange considering that Singapore was more or less fine. Traumatised but fine. He was finally speaking to me again–a relief–but tension still lingered.

"Nightmares again?" Singapore asked as I rushed towards Poland's room like I had been doing for the past few nights. Nodding, I entered Poland's room. He was thrashing about in his bed, screaming. Grabbing his shoulders, I shook him to wake him up. Gasping like a fish out of water, his eyes snapping open as they darted around frantically. Clawing at my sleeve, he blubbered, "It was so bad. TR was back and I...I..." Hesitantly, I patted his head and said soothing words. If it weren't for his current state, he would probably kill me if I tried to touch him. As he slowly calmed down, I began to sing a lullaby. It was a lullaby that Oma used to sing to me when I was growing up and I always fell asleep listening to it.

" Schlaf jetzt ein

Schlaf jetzt ein

Schlaf jetzt ein

Schlaf ein... "

I sighed softly when I finished the song. Poland had fallen asleep at some point and Singapore had taken to leaning against the door frame. His eyes were half-lidded as he yawned. Slowly getting off Poland's bed, I drew the blanket over his body. Turning to face Singapore, I told him, "You should go to bed. You're practically falling asleep."

"You're a good singer," Singapore commented.

I felt blood rushing up to my face and I was grateful for the red stripe on my face, "Thank you but I really think you should go to bed. We have a long day tomorrow."

"Do you think you could stop his nightmares?"

I looked at Singapore quizzically. "You could use your ability, no? I mean if it's what caused the nightmares in the first place, surely it can reverse the effects of it. All you need to do is get UN's permission," he continued. I shook my head violently and hissed, "My ability is a destructive one. There's *no* way I can reverse the effects. All I can do is try to calm Poland down after his nightmares." Singapore flinched and I felt a twinge of guilt. We stood in silence and my mind began to drift.

Should I really try using my ability? But what if it makes things worse. Worries flooded my head as I thought over all of the ways my ability caused further damage. But...on the other hand, it might just work. I mean...if a snake's own venom could be used to make an antivenom, couldn't the same work for me? *You aren't a snake though.* A flash of movement caught my eye and I saw Poland's brows furrow. Instinctively, my hand reached out as I patted his head. He made a soft sound before his expression ironed out again. Singapore eyed me, as I continued to pat Poland's head. It felt almost hypnotic–my actions–pat, pat, pat.

My movements became mechanical as I continued to pet Poland's head and I slowly sat back onto the edge of his bed. It felt good to watch him sleeping so peacefully. His mouth curved into a soft smile and in his sleep, he looked like an angel. (Of course, one who knew him for a long time–America for example–would know that he was not.) A distant part of me was aware Singapore was staring at me and I shifted slightly so I couldn't face him.

"Can I ask you a question?"

"Hmm?"

"Who taught you that lullaby?"

I knew that Singapore was trying to make me trust him so that he

could ask me about using my ability again. It was a tactic many royals used when communicating with their subjects or other royals. Despite knowing this, I decided to humour him for a bit. "My grandmother used to sing this to me when I was young," I answered softly, afraid that I would wake Poland up. I heard the soft rustle of fabric as Singapore sat on the ground next to me.

"My *ayah* would sing me and Malaysia a lullaby too when we were young. Especially when...during the war when...the soldiers would attack the kingdom."

"What was the lullaby like?"

Singapore smiled sadly as he murmured, "I don't remember it very well. Neither does Mal. But I think it went something like this..."

•

Kalau ada jarum patah

Jangan simpan di dalam peti

Kalau ada silap sepatah

Jangan disimpan di dalam hati

•

"It's basically about how we need to forgive and forget," Singapore explained. I nodded and complimented his singing. It was very soft and easy to listen to. Much like Oma's. In fact, when Singapore sang, if I were blindfolded, I would have thought that it was a lady singing. He blushed and thanked me. Looking at the clock on the bedside table, I realised that over an hour had passed.

"It's late."

"Yea."

"We should go to bed."

Singapore didn't reply as he furrowed his brows. "Why are you so

nice to a country who hates you?" he asked as I got off Poland's bed. I looked at him confused. *Why bring this up now?* "It's just...I don't get why you are nice to him. Is it guilt? Is it conscience? You know, you didn't have to help calm him down. I just...I just don't get it," he seemed to read my mind. A soft sigh escaped my lips as they curved upwards into a reluctant smile.

"I guess I'm just trying to make up for what I did to Poland," my gaze drifted to the country in question as I patted his hair again. He murmured something in his sleep and turned away from me. Immediately I stopped patting as the reality struck. *Right, we are still enemies.* I laughed bitterly under my breath. *How could I forget? Maybe I shouldn't even have bothered helping. It's not like he appreciates the help anyways.*

Singapore looked at me as he muttered, "I know it's a lot to ask but if you really want to make it up to Poland, you need to stop his nightmares. Maybe then..."

"Maybe then what?" I turned to face Singapore but he was already gone.

Looking at Poland, I sighed again. I had overstayed my welcome and it was time for me to leave. Yet, I couldn't bring myself to leave. Adjusting the blanket that had somehow fallen off Poland's upper body, I began to hum the lullaby unconsciously. A pair of arms circled my waist and I looked down in surprise to see Poland cuddling me.

"Stay...stay with me..." he mumbled sleepily.

You idiot. You don't even know who you are hugging. I could almost laugh yet... It felt nice. I hadn't been hugged by anyone in quite a while aside from Oma. *He's only doing this because he doesn't know that it's you. He'd throw you to the side the second he knew it were you.* East's voice reverberated around my head, snapping me out of my daydream. My smile vanished and my face returned back to its stony expression. Prying his fingers off my waist, I quickly stood up and left the room. But before I left, I turned around and took one last look at Poland.

Could I really help him?

Translations:

Ayah--Dad

Song lyrics translation:

Kalau ada jarum patah

Jangan simpan di dalam peti

Kalau ada silap sepatah

Jangan disimpan di dalam hati

If there is a broken needle

Don't keep it in the wooden chest;

If there is a wound caused by words,

Don't let it fester in your heart

A/N: Yay, another chapter finished!!! And I did it before my Monday deadline :). (I take back my words from my previous Announcement post) This was a pretty "chill" chapter and it is one of the chapters that will lead up to the conclusion of Act 1 in this book. Also, I'm not sure if Singaporeans (or even Southeast Asian people) will recognise the lullaby Singapore sang considering the name of the song isn't in the lyrics I put in but what are your guesses?

If you guessed 'Di Tanjong Katong', you are CORRECT!!! To be honest, it's more of a folk song rather than a lullaby but ermmmmm we won't talk about that. ;) Song below.

https://youtu.be/nR-JMhIffz8

Side note: When I was searching up Singaporean lullabies [to which, I did not find any. I probably wasn't searching the proper terms but never mind that--], I found this song written by Zubir Said (Said is pronounced as 'Sai-id' [I think that's how it's supposed to be pronounced]) who was the composer of the Singapore National Anthem (Majulah Singapura). It's called *Semoga Bahagia* (May you achieve happiness). Song below.

https://youtu.be/OLTlSVj9CmE

And yes, I got this from the Singapore government Youtube Channel. Anyways, QUESTION TIME KIDS!

Question time!!!

1) Not for the book per say but what do you think of the sudden "affection" Germany shows towards Poland? Do you find it inappropriate (considering in real life Germany was a complete a-hole towards Poland) or is it okay? I really want a response so I can better structure Poland and Germany's interections.

2) Why did I put that specific part of Di Tanjong Katong? (Hint: Look at the english lyrics) How does that relate to Singapore's character?

3) Do you want to the cover to be changed?

Aight, that's all for today. See you soon and stay safe! (Somedays I wonder how obvious I am with my country of origin.)

Sickness

[image]

Thud! "Poland!"

I looked up from my book and gasped. Poland was on the ground in a heap, forehead shining with sweat. America was next to him, frowning heavily. Looking up, his eyes landed on me. "Did you do something to Poland? He was fine earlier. You must have done something!" he accused me as others murmured their approval. My eyes widened as I denied the accusations.

"Students, move aside. Let's give Poland some breathing space okay? America and...er...ah, Finland, can you guys both go and get Nurse WHO or one of her helpers?" Ms NASA intervened–much to my relief–as students shuffled to the side. America huffed and glared at me before Finland ushered him away. Ms NASA bent down and lifted Poland's head onto her lap as she told everyone to sit back down. "Continue your reading everyone," she instructed as everyone reluctantly returned to their seats.

I had finished a long time ago and simply laid my head on the table hoping to get some rest. The previous night I had hardly slept. All I could think about were Singapore's words. Unfortunately for me, Russia had other ideas. "I know you didn't do anything to Poland. So please, I'm this close to begging you, just tell me what happened between you two?" he whispered. I looked at him tiredly and silently shook my head.

"For the last time, I repeat, please *stop* asking me about this."

"But-" he was cut off as the chatter suddenly increased in volume. "Look! Poland's awake!" they said. I craned my neck and sure enough, he was finally conscious. He looked around in confusion before weakly asking what he was doing on the ground. Ms NASA patiently explained everything just as America and Finland returned with Nurse WHO in tow. The nurse had a disturbed look on her face as she bent down to take a look at Poland. Ms NASA helped him up

as Nurse WHO took out a thermometer. Instructing Poland to open his mouth, she quickly got to work measuring his temperature.

"*Merde*," America's expression darkened when Nurse WHO swore. He glared at me from the corner he was in. If looks could kill, I would have already been dead. *Now what?* "Did anyone notice that Poland was extremely ill?" she asked the class as Poland's pale face flushed red. We all shook our heads–America included. "I *did* noticed he was a little pale and seemed tired earlier. He said he was fine though!" a girl squeaked.

"And I am! I...I'm fine!" Poland protested as the nurse shook her head violently. "Your temperature is literally 39.8ºC! You're literally burning up!" she shrieked hysterically. Nurse WHO could be calm most of the time but whenever someone who was injured or sick claimed that they were fine and didn't need medical help, she would lose her cool. "You are coming to the infirmary right this instant!" Poland began protesting as he tried to stand only for him to wobble as his eyes rolled back into his head before he collapsed again. Everyone around him tried to catch him but he still fell onto the ground with a soft thud. Nurse WHO slapped her forehead as she ordered, "You two in the corner there. Yes you two over there. Help me bring Poland to the infirmary now." America's eyes widened as he interrupted, "You can't be serious?! Germany *and* Russia?! Are you trying to kill Poland?!"

Ms NASA raised her hand but America paid her no mind. Without his brother holding him back, America's rage became like a wildfire gone untamed. (Unfortunately, amongst his friend group, only he and Poland were in the same form class.) "I need Russia's ability to cool Poland down," Nurse WHO explained calmly as America continued to seethe with absolute rage. "What if that *bastard* tries to freeze him! I wouldn't put it past you Russia. In fact–"

"United States of America, that is enough! Everyone back to their seats now!" Ms NASA's voice had become an octave lower as she glared. Everyone made a sound of surprise before hurrying back to their seats. Only America remained standing, glaring at me and Russia. "America. Back to your seat. Now. Let Ms WHO deal with Poland," Ms NASA's voice was firm, her electric blue eyes glowing ever so slightly with hidden rage. America huffed before sitting

back down grudgingly. He looked at me, eyes burning, message blazingly clear: *You better not harm Poland. Or else.*

Russia picked the Polish's legs up as he motioned for me to lift Poland's upper body up. Hurrying over to Poland, I quickly hiked his arms up onto my shoulders as both of us lifted him up. *Gods. He's heavier than I imagined.* After some adjustments to make sure he wouldn't fall off, Nurse WHO nodded and gave us the green light to bring him to the infirmary. "Be gentle, boys," she reminded us as we slowly walked out of class.

*

Nurse WHO thanked us as we set Poland down on a bed. "Russia, can you place your hand on Poland's forehead and use your power to cool him down? Make sure it's not too cold, I don't want brain freeze. Germany, follow me will you? I need someone's help with collecting the medication," I nodded and saw Russia give me a discreet nod. *Thank you for trusting me.* I returned the nod before following Nurse WHO. I knew that Russia wouldn't risk harming Poland. If he did, UN would definitely take heavy disciplinary actions against him. Furthermore, if he did that, he would risk displeasuring his father. The Tsar didn't like it when his children disobeyed him, often giving harsh punishments to those who did. And so far, at least from what I know, he hadn't given any new orders.

Nurse WHO brought me to a small room where she stored all her medications. The walls were lined with cabinets and medical fridges all containing medicines of all sorts. The smell of medicines and herbs assaulted my nose and I couldn't help but wrinkle it. Her helpers, Red Cross and Crescent were there sorting some medications into the respective containers from a crate. *Kingdom of Silk. Handle with care!* The box's label read. Red Cross looked up and waved to us. "Hello Prince Germany and Ms WHO. What do you need?" Nurse WHO rattled off some medical jargon as Red Cross's twin, Red Crescent, silently moved about the room grabbing the things required.

"Finally, can I get–" a piercing shriek interrupted her. *Poland.* "Get me *Valium* right now!" she ordered. Red Cross hurriedly grabbed a

glass bottle from one of the cabinets before grabbing a syringe. Nurse WHO grabbed them from him before she ran out of the room. I followed her, my heart thumping. When I entered the room, Russia was restraining Poland's arms with one arm while somehow keeping his other hand on Poland's forehead. "Great! I was about to call for you! This *uðuom* started screaming out of nowhere," Russia continued to hold onto Poland as Nurse WHO quickly stuck the syringe's needle into Poland's arm. After a minute or two, he finally calmed down as his thrashing body relaxed against the bed. Russia straightened his back, frowning heavily as he asked, "What the hell was that?"

"Nightmares." I answered as the two looked at me. Nurse WHO looked at Russia as she asked him to exit the room. He protested but one glare from the nurse and he was out. Shutting the door, she asked, "How long have these nightmares been lasting for?" "Two weeks. Ever since well...*that* happened," I rubbed my wrists. The restrictors were still on me and I had no idea how long UN intended for me to wear them. Nurse WHO clicked her tongue as she rubbed her forehead. "I assume he hasn't recovered from the side effects?" she questioned. I nodded grimly and she sighed loudly. Walking over to Poland's body, she placed her hand on his forehead. "Still warm..." she murmured before turning to me, "Can you stay here with Poland please? I'll come back in a moment to administer some fever reducing medication and then I'm going to brew something for his immunity. Poor thing hasn't been getting enough rest. It's no wonder his immune system is so weak." I nodded as she gave me a gentle smile.

I assumed Nurse WHO made Russia leave since he didn't come back into the room. Silently, I prayed that he wouldn't get into a fight with America. It would be a *disaster.* Nurse WHO came back in after a few minutes as she set up an IV bag. Once she was done, she passed me a slip of paper. "Give it to NASA tomorrow. I already told Russia to inform the rest of you teachers that you won't be joining them for the rest of the day. I hope that's okay with you?" she asked. I nodded, staying here seemed better than facing America. For a split second, I felt bad for Russia. Just a second though then it was gone. There was a couch in the corner of the room and I sat in it and I leaned my head against the white walls.

"If Poland begins to have nightmares again, call me or Red Cross," the nurse instructed me before heading off. I nodded just as Red Crescent came in carrying my book bag. She passed it to me and I thanked her. "No problem Prince Germany," she smiled warmly before exiting the room. I let out a soft sigh and leaned further into my seat. My gaze flitted about the room before settling on Poland's limp form. Another sigh.

If you really want to make it up to Poland, you need to stop his nightmares. Singapore's words echoed in my mind. "Could I? Could I really help you?" I whispered under my breath, staring forlornly at him. Of course there was no reply save for the sound of his laboured breaths. Bringing my chair nearer towards him, I smoothed out his messy hair. My hand brushed against his skin and I quickly retracted it. Warm was an understatement. Poland's forehead felt like he could cook a sunny side up on it. *Jeez, how long have you been hiding your illness?* He furrowed his brows but remained unconscious. Leaning back in my seat, I took out a book to read. Yet no matter how hard I tried to concentrate, the words kept flying off the page. Setting it back down, I looked towards the ceiling. My eyelids became heavy as I slipped down into a semi-conscious trance. It felt weird having such a peaceful moment with Poland but I liked it.

As I slipped into the grasps of oblivion, I slurred, "*Bitte werde einfach besser Polen.*"

Translations:

Merde--Shit

uɔuom--Idiot

Bitte werde einfach besser Polen--Please just get better Poland.

A/N: I have a confession to make. I only wrote this chapter because I wanted to write about someone having an illness after reading the prompts on Pinterest. Lmao. At least this forces Germany to do something I guess. I love writing my story in my own world because I DON'T HAVE TO OBEY THE TIMELINE OF OUR WORLD!!! :D THE POWERRRRRRRRR--

coughs

Also, *Valium (Brand name),* is a medication used for anxiety, seizures, muscle spasms or twitches [as stated by Cleveland Clinic] . I ain't a med student so...yes, do not trust whatever medical things I wrote (I did very minimal research).

QUESTION TIME!!!

1) Why is WHO swearing in French? (Clue: The first meeting was held in Geneva, Switerland and the headquarters is also located there)

2) What songs suits the characters (those who have had more "page time") in BbD?

Aight, that's all for today! See you!

Obudzony

[image]

I was roused from my uneasy slumber by a sharp pain in my back. Opening my eyes, I found myself lying on my stomach. "Shit...it hurts," grimacing, I got off the slab of concrete which served as my bed and shuffled over to the basin. The water in it was murky but it was all I had. Scooping out some water, I used it to wash my face. When I was done, I turned around and carefully removed my blood-stained tunic. A cold draft of air brushed against the wounds and I winced. There was a mirror above the basin–the only clean item in the cell I was held in. One would have thought that it was nice of the guards yet I knew it was just another cruel and twisted way of torturing me. I turned my head to look at the mirror, noting that the last remains of my wings were turning black at the tips. Infection was setting in. Impulsively, I reached out and plucked a feather from the remains. It was the only white one in the whole clump. I held it carefully as if it were a newborn. Just then, the cell's door slammed open as I let go of the feather.

*" **Halten Sie ihn zurück** !" a burly man, probably the leader, yelled as four guards rushed in and tackled me onto my bed. I yelled obscenities as my back flared up in pain. The remains of my wings had tried to move in their panic but because of the injuries I sustained, they weren't able to move properly. I groaned as the guards strapped me onto the bed. An old man walked in carrying a bag. He wore a grimy white coat with round glasses. " **Bitten Sie mich ernsthaft darum, ein wachsames Kind zu operieren** ?" he looked at the leader, aghast. The leader took out a knife and stalked over to him. Placing the knife against the man's neck, the leader whispered something into his ear. He paled and nodded furiously.*

"Of course! Of course!" the old man's hands shook as he sat on the

ground next to me. His breaths were shaky as he took out a slew of horrifying instruments. My breaths quickened yet I knew what was coming for me. "I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry..." his body shook as he stuck the first of many instruments into my back. I roared and thrashed about but was confined to the bed due to the restraints. Tears stained my vision as I cried out for my father. Even before the pain could subside, I felt something else tear at the muscles that held the remains of my wings together. My screams increased in volume as two guards rushed over to restrain my torso. Through my tears, I could see the old man pleading to the leader to give me something to knock me out. "This is too much! I can't–" he was stopped short by the gaping hole in his chest. Falling forward, lips stained crimson, he looked at me with glassy, unfocused, eyes. The leader handed the offending weapon to his junior and cursed. "Why do I always have to do things on my own?" he sighed dramatically as he grabbed the rest of the instruments before sticking them into my back. I thrashed even more as I began to spew profanities. A guard chuckled darkly before grabbing a dirty cloth from his pocket as he stuffed it into my mouth. I gagged as I tasted a mixture of sweat, dirt, cigarette smoke and beer. But the makeshift gag had done its job, my screams now quietened, the leader got to work destroying the remains of my wings. As he continued, my mind began to drift away. Far far into oblivion where no one could hurt me.

• • •

When I woke up, I found myself in the infirmary. My head was pounding and my muscles ached. My body shivered but I felt hot at the same time. A figure was slumped on a couch, shadows wrapping around them. I struggled to find my voice, my throat was dry, as I called out to the figure. They stirred as the shadows began to thin revealing their identity. Germany.

"What the hell are you doing here?!" I shot up, as pain coursed through my head, "Ou...ouch...f**k..." I cradled my head in my hand as a warm hand rubbed circles around my back. When the pain subsided, I found Germany next to me. I swatted his hand away and sneered, "Answer me. What are you doing here?"

Germany sighed, adjusting his glasses as he explained everything that had happened after I passed out in the middle of class. *I've been out for a whole day...I wonder how the others are faring...*When he

finished, my face was burning from embarrassment. It was true that for the past few days I hadn't been feeling well but I played it off as a common cold. I wasn't expecting it to turn into horrible sickness, much less cause me to faint, and expected it to clear in a couple days. "Well...thank you I guess," I sniffed, turning my head away from the bastard.

"You're–" Germany was cut off by the sound of the door sliding open. Looking up, I realised that it was Nurse WHO. Her eyes widened in shock as she hurried over. "How long has Poland been awake for?" she asked Germany. "He just woke up," he answered. Nurse WHO nodded as she asked me how I was feeling. I started to answer when suddenly, my stomach growled. My face turned pink as Nurse WHO giggled. "Germany dear, could you help get a snack for Poland? I think I have something in my office fridge. The office is next to the medication room," she told him. Germany nodded as he picked up his satchel before heading out of the room. Turning back to face me, Nurse WHO took out a thermometer as she stuck it onto my forehead. After a few moments, it beeped and she grinned at me.
"Great news Poland! Your fever is beginning to break which means the medication is working," she announced before adding, "You'll be off training though for the next few days. I can't have your condition worsening." I nodded, relieved to hear the news although I was slightly disappointed that I would be missing out on training again. I had barely gotten back to it and now I'd be taken out of it again. *I'll have to work very hard when I get back...* Nurse WHO patted my head reassuringly as she said, "Don't worry so much Poland. I'm sure your teacher will understand." I smiled and thanked her for her words. Her eyes twinkled as she beamed at me. However, it soon faded as her face became sombre.

"I do have to ask you something Poland. Er...that is...has the nightmares faded yet?"

I blinked rapidly, trying to find an answer that wouldn't– "Please be honest Poland," Nurse WHO interjected. My shoulders slumped forward and I let out a sigh before nodding. She frowned and crossed her arms as the mood in the room shifted. "Would that explain why you have eye bags and the cause of your illness?" she

questioned. I nodded, "It explains my eye bags but I'm not too sure about my illness. I mean...Slovakia had the flu recently and I hung out with them so I might have...Please don't go and scold them Nurse WHO!" I hurriedly added the last bit when I saw a murderous rage enter her eyes. She blinked and it was gone, making me wonder if I had imagined it. *Nah, she definitely looked like she was about to kill Slovakia.* Her posture slumped as she pinched the bridge of her nose, sighing loudly as she muttered something in French. Just then, Germany came in carrying a container. "Is this the right thing?" he asked, using one hand to scratch his neck. Nurse WHO nodded as she took the container from his hands. She brought out a small table connected to the bed as she passed me a fork (where did she get it from?). Opening up the container, I was hit with the tantalising smell of food. My stomach grumbled as I stared at the delicious looking meal. "Eat up Poland. It's all for you," those were the words I needed to hear as my body went on autopilot as it began to stab the slices of meat.

"Slow down or else you'll choke," Germany warned me and I glared at him. Swallowing my food, I asked him, "What are you doing here still? Don't you have class or something?" Nurse WHO placed a hand on my shoulder. "Poland, Germany here has–"

"It's okay Ma'am. I'll be taking my leave now. Please take care Prince Poland," Germany bowed before leaving hurriedly. I continued to eat as if nothing happened while Nurse WHO sighed. She pulled up the couch which Germany was sleeping in earlier to my bed and took a seat. She sat in silence as she waited for me to finish the food. When I was done, she packed away the items quietly. When she was done, she placed her hands on her lap. "Poland...Prince Poland...I know it's not my place to say this but the way you acted to Prince Germany was very rude earlier–especially after he helped you. I understand that you two have animosity between one another but were your words really that necessary?" she began to frown the more she spoke, her voice slowly getting louder and louder.

I leaned against the pillow as I reflected on my words. "I thanked him earlier, isn't that enough?" I asked as Nurse WHO shook her head. "Have you ever thought about letting go of the past? Forgive

me if I am wrong but Germany didn't do anything wrong to you did he? It was his father's doing. Why are you mad at someone who was never wrong in the first place?" I shook my head and chuckled darkly.

"You wouldn't get it. He didn't help me when he saw me and my father dying and in pain. All he did was stare at me. If he really felt bad for me, he would have helped me when I needed it! Not helping me makes him at fault as well," my voice had become vehement, almost like acid. Nurse WHO's head dipped as if she was thinking deeply about my words. I sighed and slowly laid back down, my eyes facing the ceiling once again. Silence engulfed the room as I began to slowly fall back asleep. But just as I was about to slip away, she asked, "What if I told you he'd help get rid of your nightmares?"

My eyes shot open as I got up hurriedly, wincing when I felt a dull ache shoot through me. "What do you mean by that?" I inquired, curiosity piqued.

"Well Singapore came in last night to check on you while you were unconscious. He suggested using Germany's ability to reverse the damage. I agree with him as this process was once done a long time ago. It stands to reason that if the source of your nightmares is because of Germany's ability, then using his ability should reverse whatever damage was done to you. If you want, I can discuss with Germany to see if he'd be willing to help, " Nurse WHO explained.

I pondered the offer. Yes, it would be nice to finally be able to get a proper night's rest yet at what cost would this come at? *What if that bastard makes things worse? He can hardly control his ability even– much less tries to learn how to.* Nurse WHO placed a warm hand on my shoulder as she confided, "This will only work if you can let go of some of the grudges you hold against Germany. The process requires both parties to work together to navigate the victim's memories. This *is* your choice Poland so I won't push for you to get this treatment but please think about the offer at least." She turned to leave when I grabbed her wrist.

"...I'll do it."

"Poland! I don't need an immediate–"

"It'll help me won't it?" I interjected as Nurse WHO deflated. She sighed as she pried her hand out of my grasps. I didn't need to think too much about it–I mean how much worse could my condition get? *I already deal with the worst, how bad can it possibly be?* "Please Nurse, I just want to get better," I whimpered when I saw her faltering. Nurse WHO sighed softly as a soft reluctant smile formed on her face. Straightening her back, she nodded.

"Very well. I'll talk to Germany about this and see if he agrees. Rest up now Poland. I'll be discharging you later tonight," she bowed before leaving the room. I laid back in my bed as I turned to look at the couch that Germany had sat in.

*Bitte werde einfach besser Polen...*those were the only words I remembered hearing while half conscious. My knowledge of German was limited but I was sure that Germany had asked me to get better soon. *Please Germany, if you wish for me to be better, don't leave me hanging again.*

Translations:

***Halten Sie ihn zurück*--**Hold him back

Bitten Sie mich ernsthaft darum, ein wachsames Kind zu operieren?--Are you seriously asking me to operate on an alert child?

Question time!!!

1. Would you want another character's POV to appear again? If so, which character?

2. What song is your favourite?

A/N: I am running out of chapter titles '-' *Crying in a corner*

But anyways, GUYS WE ARE GOING TO HIT 1K SOON!!!! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT :) Thank you to everyone who has been reading this book.

Also, SPIthePRo, here's a short scene on how Poland's father and Warsaw would react. (I guess this is canon?) The reason they found out was due to a letter that UN sent.

The sun was shining in the Kingdom of Light. King PLC walked along the hallway leisurely, humming a soft tune. He wondered how his son, Poland, was doing. "He should be fine right?" he murmured, stopping to look out to the garden. The royal pet, Balint, was swooping about, seemingly lost in sorrow. PLC smiled sadly, *You miss him two don't you?* Balint seemed to hear him as it let out a sorrowful cry.

"Hai...it's been barely two months since he left and I'm already missing him. I must be getting old. Well at least...at least he will be staying here a lot more after next year," PLC said out loud. Just then, he heard the sound of metal clanging. Looking up, he saw Warsaw running hurriedly towards him.

"You're majesty! It's about the Crown Prince--"

"What about him? Is he injured? Dead?" PLC asked alarmed, heart racing. *I can't lose Polska.* Warsaw shook his head as he passed a scroll. He took it and read through it hurriedly. When he was done, his face paled. "Is he fine? Any updates?" he asked worriedly as Warsaw shook his head.

"This is the work of that N@zi bastard! I swear--"

"Calm down Warsaw. Poland...my son...he will pull through..." PLC's gaze travelled towards the garden where Balint was perching on a tree. It was still, almost like a statue. Like it was mourning...PLC shook his head. *What am I thinking? Polska is a strong boy. He'll pull through. I shouldn't worry...he isn't weak like he once was...he's strong.* Despite that, he couldn't shake off the feeling that something would go horribly wrong. Turning to face Warsaw, he ordered for him to bring the messengers to the throne room.

"I want to pray for my son's health and safety. Get all the citizens living in the city to come to the Royal Hall. We will hold a prayer ceremony," PLC ordered as Warsaw nodded before rushing off. He

sighed as he made his way to the throne room. *Please be safe my boy. Papa cannot lose you.*

A/N: How cringe is this? Scale of 1-10. Anyways, see you soon :D!

I trust you

[image]

"Is Prince Germany here? Prince Federal Republic of Germany?" a junior, probably a Year 2 or 3 poked her head into our class. Prof. AU who was halfway through writing a question on the board nodded as she called for me to stand up. Everyone murmured curiously as I cautiously rose from my seat. A flicker of fear crossed the student's face, "Er...erm...Vice–principal Interpol has requested...requested for...for your presence at the...the Office of Discipline...Prince Germany." A few gossipy whispers spread across the classroom when they heard her question.

"Isn't that INTERPOL's office?" someone muttered.

"Yea it is. I wonder if he harmed Poland again," someone snarked.

"Is that why the poor boy isn't back yet?," another person whispered.

"Aww shit, you might be right!"

Their comments stung me but I ignored them and moved towards the student. As I neared her, she began to tremble and stutter, "Plea...please...please foll...follow...me." I sighed, *why are you so scared of me? Just because I have a shitty reputation doesn't mean I am a monster.* I wanted to say all of these but knew deep down, nothing I said would make a difference. As long as I was here, and as long as the rumours kept flying, everyone in the academy would fear me. The student began moving and I silently followed after her.

Our walk was silent until we finally reached the office. She squeaked something incomprehensible before rushing off. I sighed for what must have been the hundredth time as I stared at the large oak doors. *What if I'm in actual trouble?* My fist hovered over the surface of the door, shaking. *No. No. I shouldn't be. I didn't do*

anything else to Poland. With that in mind, I knocked quickly before retracting my hand. A few moments later, the door opened, revealing Vice-Principal INTERPOL. I caught a glimpse of a white suit sitting at her desk and shivered knowing who it was. "Please come in Prince Germany. We have much to discuss," she told me, widening the door. I froze as my eyes met UN's void black ones. A serene smile crossed his face and he motioned for me to enter. I looked at INTERPOL for confirmation and she nodded. I stayed still for a few moments before entering the room. The door closed behind me and I couldn't help but tense up.

"Take a seat please," UN motioned to the black couches surrounding the desk he sat at. I took a seat in the one furthest away from him. INTERPOL sat on the opposite couch, crossing her arms as she took a dark blue file. Opening it up, she asked, "Do you know why you are here Prince Germany?" I shook my head as her head snapped upwards. "Answer me properly," she ordered, her blue eyes glowing. Gulping, I quickly answered back, "No Vice-Principal INTERPOL." She looked towards UN who simply stood up and asked me to reveal my wrists. Confused, I obeyed him, not wanting to get another scolding from her. Rolling my sleeves up, I revealed the two golden bands that encircled my wrists. UN tapped on them four times each as they fell to the ground with a clang. I felt an invigorating rush of energy as my stagnated power began to move through my veins.

"That feels much better doesn't it?" UN asked me. I looked up at him, slowly nodding. "But sir, why did you do that? I thought I'm still on probation," I asked. UN nodded to INTERPOL who stood up and began pacing. Back and forth...back and forth...back and–

"Poland's awake now and he's doing much better," she started off, jolting me out of my daze. I heaved a sigh of relief. *Thank god.* "But, he has a request. One that involves you," she turned to look at me. I froze, digging my nails into my palms.

"He would like you to remove his nightmares," UN finished for her. INTERPOL made a disgruntled sound–clearly displeased with UN's interruption. I unclenched my fists and stared at him in disbelief. "According to Nurse WHO, well Singapore actually, you can–"

"Yes, Singapore told me. Using my ability I could potentially help Poland, yes I know this," I interrupted uncharacteristically, heart racing, as UN shot me a disgruntled look. INTERPOL ignored him as she continued, "Well since you already know what you can help with, then I suppose we can skip the explanation and get down to asking the question. Will you help Poland?"

My mind raced when I heard the question. *Help...help...what if I harm him? What if I make things worse...what if...what if I destroy his mind?* UN must have seen my panic as he stood up from his seat at INTERPOL's desk and sat next to me, placing a hand on my shoulder in an attempt to reassure me. It didn't help.

INTERPOL sat back at her desk as she nonchalantly announced, "Provided that you do not wish to accede to Poland's request, we shall be placing the restraints back onto you for an additional month."

"You didn't have to say that INTERPOL."

"Well, I think he should know the consequences of not helping," INTERPOL replied, flipping through the papers in the blue file she was reading earlier. She took off her glasses as she examined one of the pages before huffing in irritation. UN sighed loudly, pinching the bridge of his nose. I stared at the ground, feeling myself detaching from reality. My surroundings began to warp as my thoughts began to spiral

down...

down...

down...

down...

"FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY!" I was jerked back to reality when INTERPOL screamed at me. UN looked at me in concern as I tried to shake off the dazed feeling. INTERPOL was right in front of me, her striking blue eyes boring into mine. I leaned away as much as I could and apologised for spacing out.

INTERPOL let out a soft sigh, her hardened eyes softening as she walked back to her desk. "I know the decision is a very big one and I'm sorry if I came off sounding harsh but please...I would like it if you could help Poland," her tone had softened as she spoke. I looked at the ground, wishing the answer would surface from there.

"What are you afraid of?" UN asked me, lifting my head up to face him. Looking away from his unnerving gaze, I muttered, "What if I mess it up? What if I can't help Poland? I've never tried this before. What if I just make his nightmares worse for him? What if...what if...what if..." Soon, all my worries were pouring out of me as my body shook uncontrollable. The dam holding back all my emotions had finally broken as I sobbed. I only stopped when UN squeezed my shoulder. Sniffling, I tried to collect myself.

"So you want to help Poland but you're scared that you'll harm him?" he summarised. I nodded miserably, a glum expression on my face. "I just...I just don't want to harm him any further," I told him. INTERPOL chuckled as a rare smile crossed her face. "It's okay to be scared but you have to try at least," she told me. I buried my head in my hands as East and West's voices flooded my mind.

You need to help Poland, Germany. If we don't, he's going to suffer even more, West advised me.

But it's not like he appreciates the help! What if you mess it up? Ha, he'll hate you more! East retorted back.

Oh stop being such a pessimistic pest East! Germany can do it, I know he can! West shot back.

*Ah yes, the amount of faith you hold in the **same** person who lost control of his ability. Oh yes Germany indeed,* East answered sarcastically. I could almost hear him clapping.

Seeing that I was getting nowhere, UN decided to end my misery by wrapping up the meeting. "You can come back here anytime this week to give us your answer. If you decide not to help, we won't blame you or anything okay? We want you to do this on your own free will. Please don't take Vice-Principal INTERPOL's words to heart," he assured me. I nodded numbly, allowing INTERPOL to

usher me out of her office.

As I exited, she placed a hand on my shoulder. I looked at her in curiosity as she sighed. It looked like she wanted to say something yet was hesitant to do so. In the end, she simply bidded me goodbye. I bowed before hurriedly leaving.

*

The rest of the day passed in a nauseating blur. I couldn't concentrate and simply shuffled from class to class. Simple questions baffled me to no end while explanations went in one ear and out the other. All I could think about was the meeting. That goddamned meeting.

When the final school bell of the day rang, I headed back to my dorm room. To my surprise, Poland was there. We looked at each other before he broke the silence. "I suppose the Heads told you what I wanted?" he asked, crossing his arms.

"Why?"

"What?"

"Why? Why do you want someone who hurt you to...to reverse what they did? Why? Are you not scared that...aren't you...Do you have no self-preservation instincts? What if I damage you further? What if you...this doesn't help? What if you never come back?" my breathing became erratic as I continued to shoot question after question at him.

Poland was silent for a few moments, as he hung his head. But when he looked up at me, his emerald green eyes were blazing with determination. "You owe me. For not standing up to your father when he was torturing me and my dad and for harming me."

I stared at him before whispering, "You want me to repay you at the risk of your own mind shattering?" Poland, that idiot, nodded without hesitation. I looked at him, mind spinning. How could he trust me with something so fragile?

"Are you stupid?"

"Excuse me?" Poland looked at me, offended, "Are you trying to make an excuse because—"

"What if something goes wrong? How will the King react? That his one and only son—"

"Then you better pray that you don't f**k this up because I am trusting you with my life right now," Poland shot back. My ears perked up as I looked at him, stunned. *Did he just say he trusts me? That's new...* He looked at me, a scowl on his face as he asked me what I was looking at. I quickly looked away, face red from embarrassment.

"So? What's your answer?" he asked me.

"I...I'll help."

A smile emerged on Poland's face although he tried to hide it away. "Wonderful. Tell UN tomorrow and he'll arrange a session with WHO to discuss how we will go about this," he ordered. I nodded, a bit miffed that his first words were not of thanks. Poland brushed past me as he headed off to dinner. However, as he walked away, I heard him mumble, "Thank you Germany." Before I could respond, the room's door had closed, leaving me all alone.

A/N: AHHHHHHH GUYS WE HIT 1.1K!!! I'm so thankful to everyone who's read my book so far :D To celebrate this, I'll be holding either a QnA session or make a drawing or make a drawing of something in BbD (taken to vote if chosen) so please vote which one you want! One vote per person!

Q AND A!!!!!---

DRAWING!!!!--

+ + + +

2) What is your favourite country?

Aight, that's all for today. See you soon!

Ice breaker

[image]

"Hello Germany," Nurse WHO welcomed me warmly into her office. Poland was already sitting in one of the couches, munching on a cookie. "*Cześć* Germany," he greeted. I smiled awkwardly before greeting him back. She motioned for me to sit next to Poland and took a seat at her desk. Swallowing, I hesitantly sat next to him. "Cookie?" she offered it to me from a jar. I politely declined, not in the mood for any food.

For a few moments, the only sounds in the office were the sounds of Poland's munching on his cookie and the soft whir of the small fridge. After a while, Nurse WHO decided to dive into Poland's treatment plan. "Have you ever tried removing nightmares before Germany?" she questioned me. I shook my head, noticing Poland frowning. *He's probably regretting his choice now...* She nodded, before reassuring me that the procedure was uncomplicated. "If a novice was the first person to try this out and succeeded, then you too can do the same," she told me, "It's better anyways for those who are unfamiliar with their ability since this is to do with the mind. Relying on your instincts will be better in this case. If you are worried, I can let you read through this book first. Be careful with it." She passed me a blue hardcover book and I took it, thanking her. Ancient words in gold lettering and a picture of a snake twirled around a staff decorated the front cover. "This is a copy, the usual one that you get at the libraries, of the journal I keep. I can't give you the actual one since it's old. It's not very safe to give it to people. Honestly UN should keep it in a museum but–you get the idea."

"When can we get started? Today?" Poland interrupted, not bothering to hide his excitement. I only felt more pressure on my back. "Unfortunately not today. I want you to try an exercise first before we start the treatment. The procedure works the best when both parties are familiar with one another," Nurse WHO explained, "Today you'll work on that aspect. I want both of you to spend an

hour to find out 10 positive things about one another. I can leave my office as a place for you to do so or you can do this later tonight after dinner with Singapore in your dorm living room. It's up to the two of you."

"Dorm," both of us said at the exact same time. Nurse WHO nodded before telling us that she'd notify Singapore. We thanked her and she chuckled. "No problem. Tomorrow at the same time, please come back here and we can start on our treatment then if I think both of you are ready," she informed us.

We both stood to leave as we bid her goodbye. She waved back at us and we quickly left the room.

*

It was around 8pm when Singapore came back from his dinner. I was sitting on the couch–Poland chose to be in his room–reading the journal Nurse WHO had given me. The more I read about the procedure, the more nervous I felt. I could already foresee a thousand ways I could completely mess it up. I might erase a memory by accident...I might go another power run and completely fragment Poland's mind (and mine in the process if I was unlucky)...I might make his nightmares worse... Eventually, I gave up and began to read the other pages. They were much easier to process and wouldn't send me spiralling.

"Oh hey Germany," he greeted me casually. It seemed like he had gotten a bit more used to me after spending almost 2 months with me. "Hey Singapore," I smiled, setting my book down.

"I'll take a quick shower and we can start?" he asked me.

"Sure."

Just as the door to the toilet closed, Poland came out. "Is Singapore back?" he stifled a yawn. I nodded as he took a seat next to me much to my surprise. "Er...yea," I answered, berating myself for acting so awkwardly. Poland nodded, stifling another yawn. I returned back to my book as silence filled the room.

"Erm...so...er...are you feeling better? Y'know after you passed out and all," I could already hear East slapping his forehead. *Amazing social skills Deustchland. Really amazing.* I winced internally as Poland nodded. "I'm better now. Thanks for asking," we both fell silent again. *Say something! Come on! This is getting too weird.* I racked my brain for something conversation worthy but couldn't think of anything. *I can't possibly talk about the weather can I?*

It was safe to say that I was very glad when Singapore came out.

"Great, both of you are here! Let's get started shall we?" Singapore was dressed in a red shirt and grey shorts. Poland and I nodded. Singapore smiled as he quickly gave out some rules. "We'll play two truths, one lie to get started. Boring? Yes, but highly effective," he smiled brightly, "You know how to play it right?" Both of us nodded again before Poland offered to go first.

"Okay...let's see...er...the royal pet of my kingdom is called Balint, I regularly run out of the palace grounds and...I've read the entire Russian Roulette series."

"The second one is a lie," Singapore guessed.

I thought for a minute before shaking my head, "The last one is a lie. The Russian Roulette series still has...another 1 book to go. I think." Poland cracked a smile as he sheepishly scratched his head. "Haha, Germany's right. I'm not very good at lying," he admitted. Singapore looked a little miffed that he had guessed wrong but soon shrugged it off. Looking at me, he asked if I wanted to go next. I agreed and thought for a moment about what I would say.

"I have wings that appear when I'm excited. I invented a mini guillotine vegetable when I was 9 and I've only headed to my kingdom's capital 4 times in my life."

Poland and Singapore both frowned as they tried to guess which was my lie. Finally, Poland asked, "Is it the last one?" I waited for Singapore to answer but in the end he decided to follow along with Poland's answer.

"The first one was a lie. My wings appear only if I'm threatened or

scared," I answered. Their eyes widened as Poland asked hesitantly, "Can...can you...can you fly with them?" I shook my head. "I've never tried before since they don't appear often. My guess is that they are purely decorative and supposed to ward off people," I answered, playing with my fingers. He nodded and I noticed a small relieved glint in his eyes.

Singapore went next. "I once kissed China as a dare, I have an incredibly low spice tolerance and I have a connection to the Merlions," he smiled at the last bit.

"I'm gonna go with the first one as your lie. China would *never* allow that," Poland answered. I nodded and added, "If I remember, that incident created the joke about how you and China are together or something." Singapore nodded, a disgruntled look on his face. "It was a stupid accident! I was walking down the crowded hallways and I tripped. China was right in front of me and when he caught me, we accidentally kissed. On the lips. Yuck," he made a face, miming himself gagging. I chuckled as Poland asked how old he'd been.

"I must have been...Year 2. Yea, either that or the end of Year 1. Mal still teases me about it."

"I've got to say, if it weren't for remembering the controversy of that incident, I would have gone for the last statement," I commented. Singapore shrugged his shoulders as he explained that oftentimes, many people didn't believe him. "The Merlions are rare creatures so I'm not surprised. I'm just very lucky that my bloodline has a connection to them. Think it was passed from my mother or something..." he trailed off, furrowing his eyebrows. Tracing his fingers in the air, it looked like he was drawing out his family tree. After a minute though, he shook his head and stopped.

"But that's a story for another time. Specifically when I finally get my family tree sorted. For now, shall we continue with our activity? Maybe this time we can answer some of our other burning questions about one another?" he asked. I nodded.

The rest of the time was spent answering questions from one another. To my surprise, Poland's answers were fairly interesting,

some of them surprising even. Singapore's answers too. I felt as if I knew my dorm mates better and it made my stomach warm and tingly. *Is this what it's like to be close with someone?* All too soon, the night bells rang. Looking at the time, I told them that it would probably be a good idea for all of us to get some rest. Stifling a yawn, Poland agreed as he said good night before entering his room. I bade Singapore goodnight before entering my room. Hopefully Nurse WHO would give me the all clear for me to treat Poland tomorrow.

Translation:

Cześć--Hi

A/N: Damnnnnnnnnn, I managed to post at last. By the way, for those who didn't know, the Merlion is a mythical creature from Singapore whose...yea half fish and half lion.

[image]

This is what it looks like and it stands at the Singapore River and lots of people take photos with it. There's a smaller one behind it (the place is called Merlion's park) but I don't think too many people take pictures of it.

As for Singapore, since all the ASEAN kids have abilities that are based off their national animal, he has the ability of a lion since it's the national animal (If anyone wants me to explain it, I'll do that in the Q&A. Yay, S.E.A history time!) but still has a connection to the Merlion cus it's half lion and fish.

The Merlions are native to the Kingdom of Silk and are elusive creatures so spotting one is very good luck. They are quite meek but will not hesitate it harm you if they think you are a danger to them. And borrowing the idea from a book called 'Altered Straits', Merlions are in a 'hive-mind'. A group of Merlions are known as a pod.

Anyways, for those who didn't know, I won't be posting weekly but now it will be twice a month (every two weeks). I need more time to write and I have school and stuff. If we're lucky

maybe I can get another chapter out early but for now, ETA for the next chapter is next week.

Okay, byeeee! Stay safe! :D
(Yes, I am well aware that I am posting this on April fools)

1K READS Q&A SPECIAL

[image]

Since Bound By Destiny has finally crossed it's 1K milestone, I thought of opening up a Q&A session! Without further ado, let's get into it :D

Person_Meh

Q: Why is Russia so unpredictable? Is he planning something?

A: Russia...he's not really unpredictable. He just seems that way because we are seeing him from Poland and Germany's perspective. If I were to write the book--and also not focus on the characters but rather the storyline--in 3rd person, I would think Russia's actions wouldn't seem so unpredictable.
As for the second question, I answered this to ***1234germankitty*** in the chapter: Confrontation. Russia isn't really planning anything in particular but he is trying to get closer to Germany with the hope that if he "protects" Germany, he can become Ger's friend again.

There are another two reasons:

One being that this has been a longstanding order from Tsar USSR to regain the Prince of Darkness's trust--so that sanctions can be lifted from that kingdom and more trade can be done. Tsar USSR thinks Germany is quite weak (mentally) and he hopes that if his

son (or minion) can regain Ger's trust, when Ger takes the throne, the sanctions can be lifted. Currently, they can't because Prussia is on the throne and is trying not to anger the other kingdoms since she can't risk having even more sanctions on their kingdom's products. (As it was, since the 1st Great War, lots of products were sanctioned and to get them into Brittiana for example was very difficult. The 2nd Great War made things worse.)

The other is that Russia wants more allies at school. He doesn't have that many aside from his siblings, China and NK. I mean he has a few more but they are a bit iffy with him--between balancing certain aspects and stuff (eg. Kingdom regulations) so he isn't too close to them. Of course, he doesn't say it out loud but he hopes that the two can truly be friends again. (Although in real life this is complete bs. I'm taking some creativity here.)

Side note:
While I'm at it, I'd like to take some time to explain which of the USSR's kids are at the Academy cause not everyone is there. To put things simply, USSR only allows his real children: Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan (the last three countries were once called Transcaucasia) and the exception, Kazakhstan, to go to the Academy since they are the ones who will be ruling the kingdom (Aside from Kaz. Bela wanted him with her). Ukraine obviously has no wish to do so but is going anyways because the Tsar is forcing her.
Meanwhile what about, Estonia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan? The Tsar killed their parents (cause they tried to rebel but failed) but was "kind" enough to spare the babies. But he doesn't really like them too much (except maybe for Kaz because of Belarus) but still provides education for them. They are taught by royal tutors in different subjects. Other than that, they are mainly what the Tsar calls his "trophies" and are only allowed outside the castle during special occasions (eg. The Tsar's birthday). They are always forced to be kept clean and pristine and in perfect health or shape--specially--and must always have a smile. Essentially, they have a good life but it's very restrictive. Tsar USSR does this so that the locals won't rise and rebel against him ever again. Evil? Yes, very evil.

Q: GerPol?

A: As stated in the front of the book, this book contains only *1* ship which is Britain x France. There are no other ships and I do not intend to ever write romance in the book. It's not an enemy to lover trope.

What I can confirm however is that eventually, the two do become friends (yay, trauma bonding!).

I'm not interested in shipping countries even though you may see me in some RusAme/other CH ships books. (although I'll admit some of the ships are pretty cute [CanUkr is one of them]) Most of the time I read the books for plot. (But heyyyyy RR and WWMS make pretty compelling ships)

Q: What is UN's ability?

A: I explained this in the comments but "UN's power is to nullify other powers, basically he is able to make a country unable to use his or her power, while also taking some of their energy."

But this isn't his true ability. This ability was passed on from his adopted father, LON. His true ability is going to be kept a secret until much later.

Also, WHO is his sister and she has an equally strong ability and healing is a side effect of it.

1234germankitty

Q: How did Third Reich die?

A: **chuckles weakly** A lot of this story has historical references and TR's death is one of them. TR died in the same way Hitler did. Gunshot wound to the head. *pew pew*

[image]

(Still my fav drawing all time. I MEAN IT'S SO CUTE BRO!)

Q: Since there is used to be an East and West Germany, did Prince Germany have a brother? Or is that just portrayed by east and west, the angel and devil? And if not, does that mean that Germany's possible brother magically merged with him, or did he just die? If I'm honest, knowing that East was the one who saw Poland, and that Germany only knows it because of a shared memory, that would be an interesting thing to say in the least.

A: You must be a telepath because you read my mind! **confetti bursts out**

In the original plans of BbD, I had intended to make East and West Prince Germany's siblings. And Lithuania would have been Poland's sibling/ half sibling (since PLC is his father). The initial idea was that East and West would have tragically passed away when Germany was a young child after the war due to a mysterious illness. Or another idea was that East and West were alive but they were too old to go to Pangea so only Germany could go. Eventually I scraped the idea because I didn't really want to deal with so many extra characters because if that was the case...Lithuania would be Poland's sibling (currently, Lithuania is USSR's adopted daughter) and yea...so on and so forth. Thus, angel West and devil East were born. West became the angel because it was the democratic Germany and East was the devil because it was the Communist Germany. (*side note: In BbD, West is female. I don't know why I made it that way but yea...*)

Q: Does EU have a power? If so, what kind of power?

A: EU's ability is psychometry (the ability to discover facts about an event/person through touching inanimate objects which have a connection to them). His eyes glow when he uses his ability and they will remain open throughout the process. Prolonged use (more than an hour of continuous usage) will result in golden tears to be produced. No one, not even EU, knows why his tears are golden. It does sting quite a bit so EU refrains from using his ability for a long time. He's often asked to head to the Kingdom of Historia (more commonly called Historia) to scan the new artefacts brought to the Pangea History Building.

Q: Can Germany bend the shadows of people during the day? Meaning that he can bend darkness at any time?

A: Yes, Germany can bend the shadows of people during the day. Unlike Poland's ability which can only be used in the presence of sunlight, Germany's ability literally has almost 0 limits. As long as there are shadows (which is basically forever), he can use his ability. This is one reason why a lot of people fears the Kingdom of Darkness since out of all the kingdoms, those with the ability of shadows are the strongest ability users (in theory. Considering there's an unspoken rule that shadow users--if not of royal descent--should try to minimise their ability usage, not many users are very strong in their abilities. But they make great power bombs!) However, since Germany hates using his ability, he doesn't use much of his ability's potential (much to his instructor's and Prussia's exasperation). Bending the shadows of people to cloak himself is his only usage of his ability that he frequently uses.

Q: How old was Balint when Poland rescued him?

A: 5 years old.

Q: What is your opinion on cats?

A: I prefer cats to dogs. I'm not sure why but I have an irrational fear of dogs (even the cute ones) and when they bark, I get very scared. Cats are also way cuter and they are so chill. (well...maybe the older ones) I might be a bit bias since my friends really like cats and I also affectionately call them 'cats'.

Q: How do you feel about chocolate?

A: I fricking love chocolate. Milk chocolate is the best and Finnish chocolate is also so good! Of course that being said, eat it in moderation. Sometimes I eat a lot of chocolate (a lot is like one dairy milk choc. bar) and my throat begins to feel sore.

Q: Is Pangea a character in the story? If so, did she found the school? Or was it her castle?

A: Pangea is not a character in the story but the name of the world/

land that the characters live in. Think of it as Earth but squished into the size of 1 and a half Asias.
Outside of Pangea, I haven't really thought of anything else--eg. Are there other worlds?

BUT! If Pangea were a character, I would say that they would probably be like Te Fiti from Moana and would be considered a goddess/god of worship rather than this historical figure. (And yea, probably show herself as a girl) But religion isn't a big thing--well not something I'm diving into--for the story so I don't really have to write about it.

Q: Is Lithuania going to show up in this story?

A: She will appear as she is one of Tsar's Soviet's "trophy" children. But her page time isn't a lot and may just appear in a small scene I have towards the middle when Ger and Pol head to the Kingdom of Winter. Other than that, not too much. She is actually a Light Kingdom citizen by birth buttttt her mom decided to revolt against the Tsar anddddddd she got taken away to become the Tsar's "trophy". She's not a big fan of the Tsar's children and Kaz but loves Estonia and Lativa.

Q: Is Austria, in some way, related to Germany?

A: Yes and no. If by blood, no. But if you mean by events, yes. Austria and Hungary (siblings) are the son and daughter of the Austrian--Hungary Empire (AHE) who fought alongside the German Empire in the first Great War. They are much older, in their 50s, so they don't really talk to Germany that much although Austria and Germany have had some in depth conversations about some of Austria's inventions whenever Austria and Hungary come over. They are closer to Prussia since she used to take care of them during the Great War.

Q: Who was the founder of the school?

A: The League of Nations. TR, USSR, Facist Italy, J.E, Britain, France and many others were the first few students who joined the

school. After LON passed on, his adopted son, UN took up the mantle.

Q: What would have happened if TR didn't lose the war had dominance over the Kingdom of Light forever? How would Poland and Germany's lives turn out?

A: If this was the case, Poland may or may not be dead, the school wouldn't exist, Germany would probably be either severely mentally scarred (and may go insane) or adopt his father's attitude (and conquer more land when TR gave the throne to him).

The Kingdom of Light would also lose their characteristics (sunny days and warm weather) and would become run down. The citizens would also suffer many issues because 0 support will be given. Any people with light abilities may also be executed since they pose a danger to the Kingdom of Darkness. Overall, the KoL would be hell.

Random question my friend came up with.

Annebelle_lle

Q: Does pineapple belong on pizza?

A: No. Whoever invented this is not someone I will love/like. Savoury with sweet? No.

But honestly, I just don't like pineapple on pizza or fruits on savoury foods. I can eat the pineapple but I don't like it.

Also, here's Italy's opinion on it :D

Italy: DISGRACE TO THE ITALIANS!

*America: *running away* I DIDN'T DO IT!!!*

Welp! That's all for today! Hopefully I answered all your

questions properly.

My next goal for my reads is 5k reads and I think we mightttt be getting there. Slow and steady wins the race (I wrote risk at first 😂)

I'll be keeping this open for another week, i f you still have any questions feel free to ask, but after that, the Q&A will officially be closed. Until then, see you!

Unrelated but also, here's my new OC/persona.

[image]

I only coloured one because I wanted to test out the colouring. The slime's name is Eli (Ik, *how,* creative of me) and the pronouns are they/them (I mean...slime can't have gender can they?) But that being said, this isn't meant to offend anyone and it's a joke (cus I'm always melting into a puddle after writing an announcement--most of the time)

Okay, I've written too much. See you soon!

Jealousy, Jealously

[image]

I invited Germany to my lunch table 3 days after our ice-breaking activity much to everyone's surprise. "I heard that they are working on some treatment," a person whispered. "Is that why he's inviting Germany over?" another person asked. I winced internally when I heard the question. What the person had said was true, I *did* invite him over because of our treatment. Nurse WHO had told us our "connection" wasn't strong yet and so operating would be highly risky. Instead, she gave us random tasks to do to get us closer together. Honestly, I think she was bullshitting us and she was only delaying my treatment because her dearest brother UN wanted some plan of his to succeed. I didn't appreciate it considering I was hardly getting any rest. In fact, the only reason why I was able to sleep at all was because of this strangely soothing lullaby that played every time I woke up from my nightmare. It helped me fall back asleep every time I heard it and whoever was singing it had an incredibly soothing voice. *Perhaps it's my brain's imagination...a coping mechanism to deal with the nightmares.*

"Erm...thank you for...for letting me sit with you guys," Germany murmured softly, jolting me out of my thoughts, as he sat next to Japan and Italy. America glared at him while Canada gave a small smile. South Korea and Ukraine weren't here as they were either having lunch with their siblings or working on projects. Italy snorted and clapped him on the back, "Jeez, loosen up a little bit Ger." Startled, the German immediately sat up straight.

Ame rolled his eyes as he stabbed his slices of meat before angrily chewing on them. Canada looked at his brother, a warning look in his eyes before it quickly disappeared. "So Germany...er, how's school been going for you? From what I heard, these are rumours of course, but it seems like Russia has been irritating you?" he asked, pouring out some syrup onto his pancakes. Germany's face twisted into a grimace as he answered, voice strained, "It's...going fine. Russia's...just being...well Russia." America looked up sharply from

his plate as he mimicked Germany, "Russia's just being...well Russia. Of course! I'm sure you must be sucking up to him–mfffffff!" Canada slapped his hands over his brother's mouth as he looked at the German, apology written all over his face. Japan covered her mouth in shock as Italy blinked slowly, as if in a trance. *This can't be good.* I noticed Germany's hands were clutching his fork and spoon very tightly as he set them down slowly.

"I'm so sorry! Ame does mean it, he's just..." Canada looked at me frantically as if asking for help–something I couldn't provide then– as his brother clawed at his hand, "Cranky! Yea...erm, China and him were fighting yesterday and..."

"I should go," Germany cut in as he quickly got out of his seat and took his tray away. Japan rushed after him as Italy glared at Ame, "Look what you did you *stronzo*!" By then, Ame had already pried his brother's hand off his mouth as he sulked silently. I sat in shock, processing what had just happened. *What...did...did... shit, I made things worse didn't I?* Just then, Japan came back, shaking her head. She glared at Ame as she hissed, "あなたが何をしたのかわかりますか？今、ドイツは我々に対して怒っている！このバカ！"

"Come on, not you too! You know damn well I'm right. That bastard–mffff!" it was Italy's turn to hush Ame. Rage burned like amber coals in Ame's eyes as he tried to get rid of Italy's hand. "EW! STOP LICKING MY HAND!" he screeched, though he kept his hand there still. Japan huffed as she rolled her eyes. Looking at me, she said, "You better go after Ger, *Pōrando*. He's pretty upset."

I nodded, "Yea...I'll...I'll be back." I hurriedly got out of my seat and stood up surveying the dining hall for Germany's tall figure. I spotted him sitting alone at his usual corner and rushed over. He was playing around with his food, a frown on his face as he muttered under his breath. He didn't notice me until I sat opposite him, the chair creaking under my weight.

"What are you doing here?" he asked me, voice husky. I played with my fingers before blurting out, "I'm sorry for what America said earlier! He doesn't mean it. And...I'm sorry for bringing you there. I just thought–"

"Please don't be sorry for what America did. It's his own fault and...I get why you brought me over. I know, you need the procedure to happen soon. I know, your nightmares have been getting worse, so don't apologise. It's my fault I have a poor reputation," Germany swallowed several times and I could tell that the last remark about himself had hit a nerve. I sat, silent, as he played around with his food. Before I knew it, the bell had rung and lunch was over. He hadn't eaten a thing and neither had I. Taking his tray, he muttered something about seeing me later before disappearing. I sighed and headed out of the dining hall.

When I exited, I saw Ame leaning against the wall, hands in his pockets. "There you are! I've been waiting for you. C'mon, let's go for class," he started to walk before I stopped him. He turned around to face me, confused. "Why were you so mean to Germany? He didn't do anything wrong," I looked at him as he sighed loudly, pinching the bridge of his nose.

"Isn't it clear? The same reason as to why you hate him," Ame looked at me, worry clouding his eyes, "Did that asshole do something to you? Is that why you're so concerned? If I say something he might harm you?" My eyes widened as I shook my head wildly.

"No! He didn't do that! Why on earth would you–that's not the point! Look, I still hate Germany but at least I don't go about making horrible comments about him!" it was only after I said this that I realised that on the first day when we arrived, I had actually been very mean to him. *Small matter right now. And Ame doesn't need to know that.* Ame looked at me, shaking his head. "He did something, didn't he? Come on, tell me Poland. I'm not letting that son of a bitch harm you!" he exclaimed, holding me firmly by the shoulders. Something in me snapped at that moment. Twisting myself out of his grasps, I glared at him.

"Do I look weak to you?"

"Poland–"

"Look, I can take care of myself perfectly fine! Germany didn't harm me! Stop making things up just because you want to be the hero! I

don't need you!" I snapped. Ame looked at me in shock, his hands clenching and unclenching. I glared at him one last time before turning away. I heard him running after me, calling for me but I ignored him. *Self-centred bastard.*

*

By the time my classes ended, my sour mood had been replaced with burning regret. *Why did I say that?* I was about to cry from the frustration. Germany had been quiet the whole time throughout our classes although I did notice Russia getting really chummy with him. Had one been looking carefully, they would have noticed his stone cold face frowning ever so slightly. *So Canada was right huh...*

I continued to observe them until I noticed Germany glaring at me ever so slightly. *What are you looking at?* Making an apologetic face, I turned back and gasped when I saw Ame, glaring daggers at the duo. Looking down, he blinked at me before saying, "Do you have a moment? I wanted to talk to you earlier but you kept ignoring me."

I nodded just as Germany yelled, "Stop it already!" A dull thud. I looked at them, surprised to see Russia on the ground, rubbing his head. Germany's glare was terrifying as he grabbed his bag before storming out. Ame watched him with a strange look as he stormed out of the classroom. I looked at Russia, wondering if I should help him or not. He looked at me, snarling, "What are you looking at? Ugh, *Почему меня окружают ублюдки*!" He grabbed his bag and fallen ushanka before he stomped out of the room.

"Looks like someone decided to Mr Stamp-About today," Ame commented as soon as Russia left. I nodded, smiling a little bit. "Come on, let's go now. I'll walk you to the infirmary. You have something on with Nurse WHO right? We can talk and walk," he told me. I agreed and we headed out of the classroom.

*

We walked in silence for a short while through the hallways. The dying sun's rays illuminated the hall and the sky was an orange-y pink. Birds flocked past as they slowly descended to the lands below for a night's rest. We walked past the large window that overlooked

the school garden. Some students were outside, enjoying the summertime breeze. I spotted North Korea and China sitting under one of the trees playing some board game.

"Poland."

"Yes?" Ame stopped walking as he leaned against a pillar. He sighed, fiddling with the hem of his shirt. I waited for him patiently knowing he was probably mentally readying himself.

"I'mreallysorryforthestuffIsaidearlier!" I blinked, my mind processing his words.

"I was jealous...jealous of you and...and...Germany. And I didn't want you getting harmed by him. I know it's stupid," he continued, rubbing the floor with the sole of his shoe. Looking up at me, he murmured, "I just want what's best for you Poland. After all that's happened to you..."

I sighed softly and leaned against the windowsill as I looked out. "I'm sorry too America. I shouldn't have said those things," he chuckled softly. "Well, I guess we're even now. And...yea, I know, I have a hero's complex but that's not an excuse to be an ass," he smiled sheepishly, rubbing his head.

"I should probably apologise to him."

"Yea, you should."

We fell silent, neither of us making the first move. Maybe Ame was formulating a plan for his apology. I knew that Nurse WHO had requested for me to go over to the infirmary before my dinner, but I continued to observe the people outside the window. It seemed as if China had won the board game against NK judging by the frown on his face. Russia had joined them and was sitting next to the both of them, chuckling as he slapped the North Korean on the back. I looked away and observed the rest of the garden. Finland was sitting with another girl who had a blue, black and white flag. He was smiling and laughing away–a complete 180 from his stoic behaviour in class. *I wonder...*

"Hey, you have to head to the infirmary right?"

"Oh yea. I should probably go off now."

"Can I ask you a question? We can walk and talk," Ame asked me. I agreed and we started walking. As we walked, Ame asked, "How's Germany? I mean when he's alone with you or Singapore is he the same as when he's around the others?"

I thought about his question before admitting I wasn't too sure either. "I mean...he isn't close to us either but...I guess he's more relaxed? But still really formal," I commented, "Japan and Italy might have a better idea though. I mean they're close to him."

"Maybe...but he doesn't seem that close to them either," Ame mused before turning to look at me. "You think he'll ever open up?"

"I don't know. He has a bad reputation and he's been alone for most of his time here. I don't think he trusts people too much."

"So basically a loner."

"You can't blame him. I'm still not his biggest fan either. I don't even think we'll talk after my treatment is done."

"Might be for the best."

I was very glad we finally reached the infirmary. At least I wouldn't have to reply to his question. Germany was already there, talking with Red Cross. When he saw Ame, he frowned but it soon disappeared as his brow smoothened out. "Hello Poland. Hello America," he greeted us.

"Hey Germany," I smiled. His posture relaxed slightly as he nodded wordlessly.

"Nurse WHO will come back soon. Poland and Germany, you two can sit in her office. America, I'm afraid you'll have to leave now," Red Cross told us. Ame nodded before asking if he could have a word with Germany. "Can we go outside? I promise it won't take long," he said.

Germany looked at him apprehensively but nodded anyway. Ame shared a look with me, *I promise I won't do harm.* I nodded discreetly as the two exited the infirmary. Red Cross guided me to Nurse WHO's office and I took a seat in one of the plush seats.

After a while, Nurse WHO came in. She smiled as she took a seat at her desk. "Hello Poland, sorry for the wait. Erm...where's Germany? He's usually very punctual," she asked me. I explained that he was talking with Ame outside and she nodded. "Well...I guess we'll have to wait then," just as she finished, Germany came back in.

"Let's get started," he said, tone indifferent. I felt my heart sink. *Oh America, what did you do now?*

Translations:

stronzo--asshole

あなたが何をしたのかわかりますか？今、ドイツは我々に対して怒っている！このバカ！-- See what you did? Now Germany is angry with us! You idiot!

Почему меня окружают ублюдки!--Why am I surrounded by bastards!

A/N: Wow! Another 2000+ word chapter :D

I don't know...I wanna get into the second act for this book but I KEEP ADDING MORE CONFLICT- *coughs and adjusts self* Anyways, this was a pretty fun chapter to write for me. I wanted to put in a Russia and America fight scene but in the end decided against it because I wasn't sure how the hell to tie it in with the story. I think Nurse WHO *might* appreciate it.

Nurse WHO: I do. If you make them fight, I'll break *your* bones.

Eli: But you're a nurse!

Nurse WHO: And I'm fictional. >:D

Eli: *sighs*

Back to real life. The book should be moving into Act 2 in...another 3-4 chapters (hopefully) so stay tuned I guess.

•

•

•

QUESTION TIME!

1) If you could pick a superpower, what would it be? Mine would probably be teleportation or maybe shadow manipulation.

2) Did I make Ame a very hatable character?

3) From the last chapter, did anyone get the reference for another Countryhuman Fanfiction? (Clues: Mentioned during the game bit, has 914K reads and 87 parts.)

Oh yea, weird thing but WATTPAD's been taking down some books😭 so to all my fellow writers:

PLEASE SAVE YOUR STORIES ON GOOGLE DOCS OR SOMEWHERE ELSE!

(Wattpad please don't get rid of me. I'm just giving advice D:)

Two books (Social Deviant and Row of Stars) were taken down and it literally is making me so frustrated because I *personally* didn't think that it violated the TOS or anything on Wattpad. (and I checked what may be potential reasons why it got removed on Wattpad's FAQ page)

Welp, considering they *are* CH books, I guess maybeeee it might have had something else offensive, something to do with countries ;-;. Tis the price we pay when we decide to write fanfic here and it's about countries/landmasses and possibly falling--

Okay, it's late, I should go to bed. Bye!

Repairing a fractured mind

[image]

"Can I talk to you please? It won't take long," America asked me. He looked at me, eyes filled with earnestness. My heart thumped nervously but I found myself nodding. As we left, I noticed America giving Poland a strange look. *What if Poland has something to do with this?* I felt my palms become sweaty and discreetly wiped it against my pants' legs as I followed after him.

America brought me to a dark and secluded hallway. The sun's rays illuminated his face and for a split second, I swore that there was a halo over his head. He leaned against the wall as he wrung his hands together. "Um..." he started off, before abruptly trailing off. He bit the inside of his cheek as he fiddled with the buttons of his dress shirt. After that, he scratched his cheek before cracking his knuckles. "What was it you wanted to talk to me about?" I sighed, tired of waiting.

He stood up straight as he stammered, "Right...right...er...so...I...*oh come on America, it's not that hard!*" He lowered his voice as he talked to himself.

I turned to leave, not wanting to deal with him and his nonsense. As

I turned, America grabbed my wrist and spun me back to face him. "I just wanted to apologise for my actions earlier. It was uncalled for," he released my wrist when he finished. "You don't have to accept it if you don't want to," he added hurriedly, rubbing his wrist. I felt as if the air had been sucked out of my lungs. My brain felt like it was short-circuiting.

"I should go, Poland is waiting for me," I choked out before rushing out of the hallway.

*

By the time I entered Nurse WHO's office, my breathing managed to even out. She was already there with Poland. When I met his gaze, I noticed his crestfallen expression. *Did I do something wrong?* I wondered as I took a seat. Nurse WHO didn't seem to notice the sombre mood as she immediately jumped to the chase. Clapping her hands excitedly, she told us that she had good news.

"I think you two are ready to do the treatment! We can start on it today!" she exclaimed.

"Oh..." I looked at Poland, surprised by his lacklustre reaction. Nurse WHO seemed a little confused as she frowned. "Do...do you not want to do the treatment Poland? We don't have to if you don't want to," she placed a hand on his reassuringly.

"No! Of course not! Ah, let's get to it now!" Poland's eyes widened, his voice high-pitched. I frowned but said nothing. Nurse WHO narrowed her eyes but nodded anyway. "I'll grab some things before we start. Please wait for me here," she informed us before leaving. I slumped in my chair as my brain tried to remember whatever I managed to read in that blue journal. However, no matter how hard I tried to think, nothing came to my mind. Instead, it kept drifting to Poland's reaction. *Why does he seem so lacklustre? Did something happen? Did I do something to upset him?* Worry ate at me and I couldn't help but become restless.

Finally I couldn't take it. "Did I do something?" I blurted out as Poland looked at me in confusion. "Pardon? What did you say? I don't understand you," he asked, blinking in confusion. It dawned

on me that I had been speaking in German. "Sorry. I...I asked if I did something wrong. You seem off–especially when Nurse WHO announced that treatment could begin. I thought you couldn't wait for it to begin?" I repeated my question, face a little red.

Poland relaxed and sighed softly. He murmured under his breath but I didn't catch it. Looking at me he asked, "Earlier...with Ame...did he say anything mean? Your expression was stormy...and I thought that he...are you okay?" *So that's what he's worrying about.* I immediately apologised for worrying him and reassured him that everything was fine.

He sighed as he leaned back into his seat. "Thank god. I thought that that idiot had said something mean again. For once he is using his brains," he chuckled. I found myself smiling, a small giggle slipping out. Poland looked a bit taken aback but didn't say anything. We sat quietly, stuck in our own thoughts. But other than that, it was peaceful.

Nurse WHO returned with a tray a while later and she set it down carefully on her desk. Red Cross followed after her carrying a large blanket and he threw it onto a nearby couch before leaving. I peered into the tray noticing a syringe and a small glass bottle. There was also some rubbing alcohol and cotton gauzes.

"I want you to sign this form here Poland. It basically confirms that you are going to go through with this treatment. Germany will also sign it. In the event that anything happens to either of you, do not worry as the school will take care of it," Nurse WHO slid two separate clipboards to us with a pen on them. Poland hurriedly scribbled his signature onto it and I followed after him once I read through the whole paper to check for loopholes. It was something that Oma had instilled into me. *"Always check the paper's terms and conditions Deustchland," she told me as she read through a thick stack of papers.* The thought of her made me tear a little. *I hope she's doing well.*

After checking through the papers, Nurse WHO instructed Poland to sit on the couch with the blanket. She picked up the syringe and the bottle of medicine as she took some of the liquid. As she did this, she explained, "I'll be administering this hypnotic–a sedative–to

help calm you down. You'll feel a little drowsy but don't be alarmed. I just want to make sure you don't trash about later when Germany does his thing. It'll also help bring your subconsciousness to the surface a little more, making his job easier."

Poland looked a bit nervous but laid down. Nurse WHO walked over as she held the syringe over his arm. "Ready?" she asked. He nodded but his nervousness still shone through. I stood up and kneeled next to him as I took his hand. "In the name of our Holy King, I promise that I will do my best to ensure no damage occurs," his eyes widened at the use of a common phrase used to seal promises used in his kingdom. It felt weird using a phrase traditionally reserved for those in the Kingdom of Light but I felt that by using it, Poland would feel more at ease. He smiled softly and thanked me. Nurse WHO gave me a small nod of thanks as she counted down from three to one. Before she hit three, she had already injected him with the drug.

Cleaning up the injection site, she told us that it would probably kick in in another 5 minutes. Using that time, I tried to build up a conversation with Poland since the journal had said that it would be a good way to help the patient to calm down. As we talked, I noticed him having difficulty keeping his eyes open and he seemed to process things slower. His speech had also slowed considerably and I could tell that he was making tremendous effort not to slur his words. Nurse WHO who had been observing us intervened and told me that I could start the treatment. "You know what to do right?" she double checked. I nodded, feeling my heart thumping steadily.

"Good luck then. I'll see you soon," she smiled.

I thanked her as I took a deep breath in. Shadows crawled towards me and I felt a pull. *Chaos. Destruction.* I ignored them as I allowed the shadows to pool at the base of my palm. I couldn't afford a distraction. I don't know when it happened but somewhere along the way, my subconsciousness took over and the next thing I knew, I was falling through darkness.

*

"STOP ALREADY! I BEG YOU!"

"Halten Sie ihn zurück!"

"Aughhhhhhhhhhh!"

"Papa, please...no...stay with me please!"

I gasped as I "awoke". Surveying my surroundings, I realised that I was suspended in darkness. Despite this, there was a circle of light surrounding me. Panic gripped my chest but I fought against it trying to keep calm. I couldn't afford for something to go wrong. I shut my eyes and tried to recall what I read.

"Poland, come out please," I called out into the darkness. My voice echoed across the dark plains but there was no reply. "Poland!" I repeated but there was no reply. *Great. How can I get his subconscious or consciousness to come out...* Poland was surely fast asleep by now and at the back of my mind, I was also aware that I was probably slumped over him in some ridiculous pose if Nurse WHO hadn't shift me yet. *I hope not—FOCUS GERMANY!*

"Poland?" I called out again but there was no reply. I scratched my head as I tried to find a way for me to get to him. *What if I called him in his language?* "Polska?" I called out. All around me, the darkness seemed to pulsate until a young battered and bruised boy emerged. *Poland's subconscious,* the thought came to me instinctively. He was bloodied and half of his wing was gone. Memories of that fateful day flashed in my mind and I felt my chest constrict.

"Who...who...are you," he asked, accent thick.

"I'm Germany," I answered after a moment of hesitation.

Fear flashed across the boy's (maybe I'll call this version of him Polska) as the darkness seemed to swallow him. I grabbed him and he shrieked. "*Odejdź ode mnie!*" he cried, as the darkness pooled around us. The circle of light that surrounded me became smaller and smaller and I realised that I was gradually sinking into the inky blackness. It felt icy against my skin. Polska continued to claw at me, screaming in Polish but I held onto him. The darkness was up to my chest now and the iciness was chilling me to the bone. It was

extremely uncomfortable but I continued to hold onto him. I was afraid that if I let go of him, I would not be able to get him back.

Polska was the first to be submerged and I soon followed suit. The circle of light vanished along with me and I soon found myself free-falling through a blank space. "Ouch!" I yelped, hitting the ground. When I looked up, I saw Polska sitting on a wooden chair. As soon as he spotted me, he shifted and transformed in a flurry of feathers. When the feathers vanished, Polska looked almost like Poland. I say almost for there were two humongous wings on his back. They gleamed and I felt like I was staring into the face of an angel (and I did not mean that in a good way). He wore a simple turtleneck and slacks. He stared at me, studying me as if I was a lab rat. I felt my body shiver and I didn't like the feeling. It felt like I was exposed and he was able to read all my thoughts–although I knew that was highly unlikely. It wasn't as if my subconscious was open to him.

"Why are you here?" he asked me after a long time, voice soft, almost like a scared child.

I hesitated, afraid that the same thing would happen again. After a while, I muttered, "I want to help you...or more specifically Poland. He–"

"Is experiencing nightmares. I know that. Something happened. Something...shifted the balance," Polska interrupted me. I felt a pang of regret. *This is all my fault.* "I try to stop them–the nightmares–but they keep coming and I'm thrown into the fray. I've tried everything but nothing works." he looked at me, a smile on his face. "But you're here to help right?" his voice carried a note of hope. I nodded, trying to act confident. *I need to show my confidence or else his subconsciousness won't accept me or my help.*

He sighed in relief before asking what he could do for me. "I need you to bring me to the memory core," I instinctively told him, surprised at myself. *What the...I didn't even read that bit. Whatever, now's not the time.* Polska nodded and grabbed my arm. "You might want to close your eyes for this bit. It's a bit dizzying," he told me. I nodded and shut my eyes. When he told me I could open them again, I was surprised to find myself in a library of sorts. Colourful spheres lined the shelfs. There was red, blue, yellow–or maybe it

was gold, green, pink, orange, purple...

"Welcome to the memory core!" Polska had somehow managed to change into this pinstripe uniform complete with a hat. I noticed a few cracks at his neck but he quickly clapped his hand over them. *Weird but erm...okay.* "Okay...so what are you looking for?" he asked me, a book in his hands.

"Er...well erm...do nightmares get recorded?" I asked. Polska nodded as he spun the wheel behind him. Within seconds, there was a whole shelf of black coloured spheres. It was an extremely tall shelf and for most of the spheres, I could see flashes of purple. *Vater's ability I guess.* My father had a bit of an "accessory" to his ability– that being swatches of purple infused in his ability. I remembered growing up seeing him use it–though rarely in front of me. My heart thumped and my mind blanked. *How...how do I do this again?*

Suddenly, a flicker of red caught my attention. "Can I take a look at that sphere please?" I asked Polska. He was developing more cracks along his neck and seemed a bit startled when I called out to him. "Yessiree!" he laughed nervously as he handed me the sphere. As soon as I touched it, I felt my stomach lurch as my vision faded to black.

*

I was in a cell of some sort. When I looked at my hands, they had become non-corporal–almost akin to a ghost. Poland was curled up in the darkest corner of the room, his shirt off, bandages wrapped around his torso. They were stained brownish-red and there were hints of green. The smell of infection was strong and I felt like throwing up.

I walked over to Poland and kneeled down. His hair was matted with grime and dirt. I tried to swipe it to the side but my hand simply passed through him. "You can't touch things here. It's a memory," I turned around to face a ghostly Polska. His skin was marred with cracks that he tried to hide. I wanted to ask him about them when suddenly, the cell's door slammed open.

*" **Aufstehen!** " a soldier picked Poland up by the neck, ignoring his screams and forced him to march out of his cell. When he didn't*

compile, the soldier took out his baton and began to hit Poland. I noticed, with horror, that he kept striking the Polish's back. With each hit, Poland's screams increased until he was hit in the head. Everything went dark.

*

I gasped as I returned back to the memory core. Polska was in front of me, his body marred with the same cracks as I had seen earlier. "I...I don't know what to say," I admitted, handing over the sphere. Polska accepted, hands trembling as he placed it carefully onto the shelf. "It's okay! It's a-okay!" he chuckled as the cracks on his skin widened. I frowned, noticing that something was off.

"Polska, are you okay? Do you need me to withdraw from Poland's mind?" I asked politely. Polska shook his head furiously, "No! No! Do what you need to do!" I frowned harder but didn't say anything. "The problem right now is that a lot of the nightmares Poland is experiencing are memories that he has locked away for years. Now with that shift, the memories are tumbling out and haunting him," Polska changed the topic. I decided to ignore that fact and nodded along wordlessly.

Reaching out to the shelf of nightmares, I lightly brushed my fingers against the spheres feeling a shiver of energy go down my spine. "May I take a look at the memories from the war?" I asked Polska. He paused for a moment before announcing, "War memories coming right up!" He spun the wheel again and the shelfs shifted around in an array of dizzying colours. When they slowed down, the shelf showed dark red spheres with crackles of purple energy around them. They were covered in a thin veil of gold which flickered.

"What is this?"

"The shield. It's used to block out memories from the conscious mind. It used to be stronger but now it keeps flickering," Polska explained to me.

I walked closer towards the veil and placed a palm on it. My hand slipped through–much to my surprise–and I touched the nearest

sphere. My stomach lurched again and my world was drowned in darkness once again.

All I heard were screams. They sounded like Poland's and judging by the sound of water, I suspected I knew what was going on. *Waterboarding.* However, before I could process anything else, I was yanked out of the memory.

I gasped like a fish out of water as Polska held me by the scruff of my shirt. There were more cracks now and they were beginning to cover his eyes. "Are you okay?" he asked me, voice slightly distorted. "Yea, what about you?" I asked, gesturing to the cracks. He smiled and shook his head, telling me not to worry. I was sceptical but I didn't say anything. We had more important things to do.

I looked around the spheres, careful not to touch them. The veil flickered, making it hard for me to see. However, the more I stared, the more I could see the cracks on them. Something clicked and I stared at the veil.

"Well, do you know what to do?" Polska asked me.

"Yea, I think I know what to do."

As soon as I said it, shadows erupted from my hands. Polska let out a shriek as he ducked for cover. I ignored him and aimed them at the veil. The shadows twisted around and I could hear East's voice faintly telling me to wreck Poland's mind. *Shut up East.* He fell quiet, allowing me to concentrate. I allowed the shadows to weave into the veil and the spheres. Screams of agony, interlaced with some German words, wrecked my mind. It horrified me when I heard the German phrases and I couldn't believe my hearing. I could also hear Poland crying for help and regret coursed through my veins. *Could things have turned out different if I had helped him then?*

Part of my instincts must have taken over at some point because before I knew it, the spheres were no longer crackling with the purple energy and the cracks had disappeared. The remaining shadows were now intertwining with the veil as if mending it. I

continued to let them work as Polska emerged from his hiding spot. He stared at my work in amazement as the last wisps of my ability vanished. The cracks on his body were still there but they seemed to be healing.

"Woah..." Polska seemed speechless as I kneeled over, grabbing my stomach. When he noticed that I was in pain, he squawked as he tried to hold me up. It didn't work. I felt my mind slowly retreating back to my real body and my vision wavered. My body began to flicker and Polska let out a sigh.

"You're leaving aren't you?" he whispered.

"I...I...I think so."

Another sigh. Polska grabbed my hands although they kept flickering in and out of existence. "Then I'll make this quick. Thank you Germany. I appreciate your help," Polska smiled as my body began flickering furiously. "It was my pleasure. I hope whatever I did worked. I'll–" I didn't get to finish my sentence before I felt my mind lurch. Without a warning, my subconsciousness took over and I began my journey back.

*

I woke up in Nurse WHO's office. "Welcome back," she smiled at me as I blinked groggily. There was a pins and needles all over my body. It took a moment to register everything and when I did, I realised that I was lying on top of Poland, my left hand on his forehead. I hurriedly straightened myself but fell back onto my butt due to the vertigo. "Did it work?" I asked her as she helped me onto the nearby chair.

"We won't know until tomorrow."

"Oh," it would have been a lie if I said that I wasn't disappointed.

"It's late already. I had Red Crescent get you some food and I've already notified your teachers that you might be running late for class tomorrow. Are you okay?" Nurse WHO asked me, voice soft.

"Yea, yea. I'm fine," I answered, forcing myself to stand up. My legs

felt like jelly and I felt like if I let my eyes stay shut for a second longer, I would fall asleep. "Will Poland be staying here tonight?"

Nurse WHO nodded and told me that she would be shifting him to a bed. I nodded and thanked her before stumbling out of her office. Red Crescent was at the front desk and when she saw me, she walked over, holding a box of food. I took it, thanking her before I left the infirmary.

"Oh, you're still awake? It's already 11," I opened the door, surprised to see Singapore sitting on the couch with a book and pen in his hands. He closed it and set it aside as he stood up. "Yea, I was waiting for you. I heard you did the treatment? How did it go?" he asked.

"I don't know. He's asleep so Nurse WHO told me that we would only know tomorrow."

"Ah I see. How are you feeling?"

"Horrible. I feel like passing out," I admitted, struggling from the nausea. Singapore's eyes widened as he apologised for holding me up. "I'll be going to bed now. Get some rest Germany. Good night," he told me, grabbing his book and pen before leaving.

"Night Singapore," Singapore nodded before entering his room. I don't remember what else I did besides having dinner. Everything else faded away as my body went on autopilot. The only thing I remember was setting my spectacles on the bedside desk before my body finally gave out.

Translations:

Halten Sie ihn zurück!--Hold him back!

Odejdź ode mnie!--Get away from me!

Aufstehen!--Stand up!

A/N: Holy…mother of a cow--

3797. Fricking. Words.

I'm mind blown.

But in all seriousness, this chapter is much longer because of the healing crap and stuff. I hope that this wasn't too anti-climatic and shitty.

And for those wondering why Polska has cracks on his body, it was to represent his breaking mind. For Poland, he uses a fking ton of humour to cope so that's also why his subconsciousness does the same.**

Okay, Question time!

1) Would you want longer chapters like this in the future?

2) What was Singapore doing before Germany came in?

Also, just to note, soooo Wattpad's doing some purge thingy? I'm not sure if by tomorrow this is still here but if it is, LESSGO!

Anyhow, because of the recent "purge" (or whatever), I thought of setting up an alt. acc on AO3 (Archive for our own) since it's a bit more lax there. I haven't gotten an account yet (cus I just applied) but should get it either by late April or early May. So I may cross-post stuff on there as well just in case. More updates if I do so. If y'all have tips on Ao3 procedure please tell me! :) I would really appreciate it.

Okay, it's 10+pm and I have school tomorrow. I'm gonna die :D.

Issok, how bad can it possibly be? *nervous laughter*

Right?

Okay, bye.

Healed

[image]

When I woke up, I was greeted by Red Cross. "Good morning!" he chirped as he helped me up. I thanked him, feeling my muscles aching. "What time is it?" I asked hoarsely. He looked at his wristwatch, "7.30am. Are you feeling any pain?"

I shook my head. In fact, I was feeling extremely refreshed–more than I had ever been since the nightmares started. *Does it mean I'm healed?* My train of thought was cut off by a loud rumble from my stomach. Red Cross looked at me in amusement as my face turned beet red. "I'll get you something to eat. Er...do you have any preferences or cravings?" he asked. I shook my head and thanked him. "No problem. Nurse WHO is dealing with some patients now–"

A yelp cut him off and laughter followed along. "Hahahahaha, Myanmar's such a baby!" a voice chortled. "Oh shut up Indo! You're brother's injured for goodness sake!" a female voice scolded Indonesia. It was probably the eldest sister of the ASEAN family, Vietnam.

Red Cross sighed loudly, looking like he aged another 10 years. "I swear ASEAN's kids will be the death of me," he muttered before looking a bit embarrassed when he realised that he had said it out loud. He smiled awkwardly before bowing and scurrying away.

I leaned back onto the pillows, rubbing my eyes, feeling the eye wax coming off. I stretched, wincing in pain. However, the aches soon disappeared and I felt much better. I laid in the bed, letting my thoughts drift about. A light knock jolted me out of my trance.

"Hello Poland. How are you feeling?" it was Singapore. I smiled and welcomed him in. "I'm fine. What brings you here?" I asked him, "I thought classes are supposed to be starting soon?" He nodded but

pointed outside of the room towards where the voices were coming from earlier. "I'm supposed to escort *dearest* Indonesia to his classes and make sure he and Myan don't fight again," he rolled his eyes. I laughed good-naturedly in response.

Singapore only sighed in response, rubbing his forehead. My smile slipped off as I frowned in concern, "Is everything okay?" He gave me a strained smile and nodded. I gave him what Italy likes to call '*the mom-face*' and repeated the question. His shoulders slumped and the light in his eyes dimmed. "Do you ever feel like people expect everything of you? To be the best of the best?" he whispered. I looked at him in confusion.

Singapore sighed again and rubbed his hand over his face. When he looked back at me, he had a smile on his face again. "It's okay. Please forget what I said. I'll be taking my leave now," he bowed and left. I sat in silence, reeling from his words. *What happened? Why did he ask those questions? Is he okay?* Something about the Singaporean seemed off but I couldn't place what the hell it was. Nurse WHO came in just then, with a tray of food. She kicked the door close and walked over to me. "Slept well I hope?" she asked me, setting down the food on the bedside table as she brought up the foldable table. My mouth watered at the smell of the delicious food and my stomach grumbled in hunger. I hadn't eaten anything since yesterday afternoon. As soon as the food was set in front of me, I began eating like a starving man (which in a way I was). Between mouthfuls, I answered, "Yep, I feel way more refreshed than I have in the past few weeks."

"Did you experience nightmares?"

I shook my head. "If I did, I don't remember them," I told her. Nurse WHO nodded, making a note in her chart. "Well, you slept without interruption so that's some progress," she mused, tapping her pen against the clipboard. "Oh by the way, where's Germany? Is he okay? Healing me surely couldn't have been easy," I asked, realising that I had completely forgotten about him.

"Ah, he finished around 11-ish last night. He seemed pretty tired– but I don't think it's nothing a good rest can't fix. I sent his teachers a note saying he'd be late."

I nodded. *Germany's probably in class by now.* Knowing him, he hated missing lessons and even if given a proper excuse to miss it, he'd always join as long as he was physically able to. *I hope to see him later though. I need to thank him.* Nurse WHO asked to give me an examination seeing that I was done eating. The first I blurted out was, "I don't have to take off my shirt again like the last time right?" She chuckled and shook her head. I heaved a sigh of relief.

"Well, all seems good. Your vitals are steady and your temperature is normal," Nurse WHO nodded, looking pleased, as she jotted down the details onto her chart. No doubt that these would go into my medical folder. Every student had one. They were usually released to parents at the end of the academic school year so that parents–and if you were royalty, the royal doctor–would know their child's medical needs, if there were any. Once, I stayed over at Ame's palace and I happened to spot his medical folder. Or more accurately, folders. That boy has gotten himself into the infirmary so many times I'm amazed that Nurse WHO hasn't already thought of designating a whole space just for him.

I wonder if Russia's medical notes are as extensive as Ame's. That wouldn't be surprising since both of them often came into the infirmary because of their fights. I remembered one time when Ame, we must have been in Year 2 or 3, had his shoulder dislocated due to Russia using too much force on him. I remembered their parents having to come over and how the whole school was scared of Tsar USSR so much that they refused to wander the halls alone. Even his own children refused to walk alone–especially Ukraine. She never really liked her father or brother.

"Great. Can I go back to classes then?" I asked Nurse WHO, barely hiding the excitement in my voice. She nodded but reminded me to take it easy. "You can still engage in training but just be careful," she warned. I nodded, relieved that I wouldn't have to stop training again. Nurse WHO gave me some papers for me to sign before she gave me the greenlight to leave the infirmary. I thanked her before skipping off.

I was already late for my first class so I decided to only go for my subsequent one. Plus, it'd give me time to wash up and prepare. I hurried back to my dorm room and took a quick shower before

changing into my school uniform. I double-checked my timetable as I packed my bag. When I was done, I was left with about 10 minutes before my next class started. *I guess I'll just walk slowly to the classroom then.*

*

When I entered the classroom, my classmates cheered. Well, almost all of them. Russia, Finland and Germany didn't. Finland did acknowledge me with a slight nod. Germany was sleeping–at least I think he was–I couldn't really see him. Russia...well he was being his usual anti-social, scowling self. "How did the treatment go?" everyone crowded around me, asking me questions. My heart beated a bit faster as sweat dripped down my neck. "Er..." I didn't know what to say. Through the crack, I saw Germany looking up, yawning before stopping mid-way as he stared at the crowd. I stared at him in desperation and he froze.

"Everyone, please sit back down now. Prof. ASEAN is here," Finland stood up, towering over everyone as the room seemed to darken. Everyone fell silent as they quietly retreated back to their seats. I gave Finland a look of thanks but he had already turned away. Prof. ASEAN coughed before asking, "Is everyone ready now?"

"Yes Professor ASEAN."

"Good. Open your books to page 246, we'll be going through complex numbers. I started on this last lesson so if you have notes on that, take them out," he instructed us. I sighed in relief as I took out the stuff I needed, at least some people were acting normal. After making sure all of us had our books and notes, Prof. ASEAN started the lesson. Not surprisingly, a lot of my classmates were nodding off to sleep–not that I could blame them. Math lessons could be a complete bore (and torture).

"Russia! Stop sleeping in my class! Come to the front. I want you to solve this question–maybe it'll wake you up. Come on, get up," Russia grumbled as he stalked to the front. He stared at the question on the board. After a few seconds, he quickly wrote down the answer. Prof. ASEAN looked at Russia's answer before nodding. "Good job. Now please explain how you got the answer," he

instructed.

Russia sighed dramatically before going into a monotonous explanation of how *blah blah blah.* I turned around slightly, pretending to stretch. Really, I just wanted to see how my other classmates were faring. Unsurprisingly, most were already in Lala-land. Only a few were actively taking down notes. Much to my amazement, Germany wasn't one of them. He was dozing off, struggling to keep his eyes open.

"That's right. You can go back to your seat now but *please* pay attention. GERMANY!" Germany's eyes shot open and he hurriedly straightened himself. Prof. ASEAN pointed to the board, "Solve the question here." Germany rubbed his eyes as he got up, stifling a yawn. He shuffled to the front and took the chalk from our teacher. Analysing the question, he slowly wrote out some equations. When he was done, he began his explanation. When he was done, Prof. ASEAN was beaming from ear to ear, "Amazing, I couldn't have explained it any better. Head back to your seat. Now as Germany explained..."

I tuned him out and began doodling on my notepad. Time flew and before I knew it, I had filled an entire page with random drawings. I looked at the board and got a shock. *Holy crap, when did he write such complex shit?* This is why I hate math classes. I do one thing and the next thing I know, the board is filled with complex equations my poor brain can't wrap around. *I'm going to have to ask for notes again.* "Poland, come–" Prof. ASEAN was cut off by the chimes. He sighed as everyone began packing their stuff. "Saved by the bell huh? All right, all of you quieten down," the classroom fell silent, "I want you to do *all* the questions from pages 301-304. We'll be going through them during tomorrow's lesson. I'll be checking if you did them. That's all." I groaned along with most of my classmates.

"Sir, can't we have less?" a girl asked.

Prof. ASEAN looked up, "I'm giving you very little already."

"But-"

"If you ask again, I'll add two more pages."

The girl immediately shut her mouth. Packing up his items, Prof. ASEAN wished us a good day before heading off. The second he headed out, Ame turned around to face me. "I'm going to die," he bemoaned dramatically. I chuckled before asking if he wanted to work on the questions together. He looked at me apologetically and said, "Sorry, I've got plans with Maple Man already. We're planning to tackle science together."

"Oh, I see. It's fine then."

"Ugh, I seriously hate the upper years. Why do we even have so much homework?"

"Haha, enjoy it while it lasts. You'll be begging for homework when you become king."

Ame frowned, slumping over. "I don't know if I want to be king. I mean I don't blame Maple for not wanting to be king. Honestly, his personality is better suited for a prince but I'm not sure if I want to be king. I'm too free-spirited and I don't really like being tied down to a commitment," he told me.

"Then why don't you tell your parents that? I'm sure Queen France and King Britain will understand."

Ame laughed harshly, face contorting. "I can't. If I abdicate the throne, Dad's going to flip. He doesn't really trust Aussie or Kiwi that much. Plus those two are still too young. And I've got the kingdom's occupants to think about. If I abdicate, they're going to lose trust and hope in us. And if I really wanted to, I wouldn't have even wasted time taking up those extra classes on ruling. At least Maple made it clear he didn't want to be king before we joined the school."

I pursed my lips. Despite his care-free personality, those who knew Ame well would also know that he carried a heavy burden. Being the Golden Child of Britannia and future king, many people had placed their expectations on him. Unfortunately, he wasn't the only one who felt that way. Most people I knew also had heavy burdens

to shoulder. It was the sad truth of being a royal. Behind all that glitter...

"Hey, at least you have another year right?" I tried to lighten the mood. Ame smirked, sighing as he dramatically announced, "And a f**k ton of homework." I laughed, glad to have made him happier. Just then, Ms NASA came in.

"I'm so sorry I'm late. There was an incident I had to take care of in my last class. Okay, take out your notebooks because we'll be heading to the labs today to do some experiments," she instructed us. Ame's eyes lit up and punched his fist into the air.

"You better not set anything on fire."

"When have I ever?"

A/n: I'm honestly so horrified at how I have 20+ chapters and I'm not even at Act/Part 2. Anyhoo, I'm siding with Poland on this one--math is really boring but strangely also fun (if you are enjoying and doing well in a topic that being said). I've already found myself falling asleep in math class a bunch of times this term.

Also, side note: I made Prof. ASEAN damn nice here. Bro really let his students out when the bell rings. My teacher: *continues to teach and sometimes run over time and eat a few minutes into break/lunch*

I love my teacher but I also want to have my break. (For the record, this is probably the only class I have that this happens often. My school has a rule that says teachers ideally should release us 5 minutes early to facilitate students' movements to other classes/prepare for next class. I'm just really lucky all my math classes are just before my break/lunch.)

Question time!

1) Who here is feeling bad for Ame already? Cause I feel bad. In fact, I feel bad for all my characters.

2) Unrelated: Do you prefer uniforms or wearing your own clothing?

Cause I do know for most American schools (well, public schools) they don't need a uniform and some countries also don't require. In my country, we have to wear a uniform all the time (except for celebrations or events) from (if you went) kindergarten/preschool till high school/junior college.

I mean...I'm pretty lucky that my current school doesn't impose strict rules on the shoes we can wear (my primary/elementary school did) and that our casual uniform--quotes from my parent--"looks like a set of PJs." so they are damn comfy. But my primary/elementary school uniform...*eyes widen and shakes head* Oh hell--the tie. The fricking tie.

It. Was. Hell. I felt like I was choking everytime I put it on.

I mean I am exaggerating it a bit but I really didn't like wearing the tie because it was so uncomfortable. Then in my final two years it got too short but I was lazy to buy another one. Lmao. (It was also cus in my final 2 years I got to wear a vest so I didn't feel the need to buy another tie.)

BUT! My current school's P.E attire looks like the stereotypical jail bird pattern that in Year 1, all my friends were like: Who tf designed this? (why do I feel like I mentioned this before)

I feel like I've been rambling too much. See you guys soon!

Also, here are the uniform refs. I'll put in the ones I drew later. These are from Picrew. They are in the UN's colours.

Male: The male's uniform is a white shirt paired with a blue tie and jacket and white pants. It also comes with a brown satchel which students can use (which many do) Final two years have golden stripes/accents instead.

[image]

Female: The female uniform has two variations. Both variations

white shirt and a white ruffle with gold lining paired with the brown satchel. The difference is the skirt. The skirt can be short–reaching just above the knees–and "office" like or it can be long–reaching the ankles–giving a teacherly vibe.

[image]

[image]

Taking the first step

[image]

Ringgggg! The final bell rang, signalling the end of another tiring school day. Prof. EU smiled as he began packing up his books. "Well, that marks the end of our lesson for today. Remember to read pages 215–230. I'll be quizzing you kids on the content next class," he reminded us, "Have a good evening!" Ame stood up in his sea, stretching as the classroom filled with chatter.

"Wooo! Finally the classes are over!" he cheered.

"Sorry to burst your bubble but we have a ton of homework to do."

Ame stuck out his tongue childishly as he plugged his ears with his fingers, "La-la-la! I can't hear you! Therefore my homework doesn't exist!" "Oh shut up already *Америка*!" a shadow fell over me and when I looked up, I was horrified to see Russia towering above me. Ame smirked and coyly waved at the Slav. Russia recoiled, disgust apparent on his face. He muttered something under his breath before giving Ame one last glare and left. As soon as he had gone, Ame burst into laughter. "Oh man, did you see the look on his face when I waved at him? Oh my...hahahahahahahahahahaha," he howled, face red, "Hahahahahahahahaha, he's soooooo f**king scared I'll hit on him, hahahahahahahahahaha! As if I'm...hahahahahahahahaha..." Everyone was now staring at the crazy prince. I grabbed his collar and hissed at him to shut up. Slowly, Ame stopped laughing although he was still giggling (like some teenage love-sick girl if I may add). Rolling my eyes, I began packing up my stuff while he waited for me. "Come on, let's go already," I muttered gruffly. Ame, still giggling, nodded, followed after me.

We entered the dining hall where we found Italy waving us over. I raised my hand, acknowledging him as we headed over to the meal area to grab our food. After we got it, Ame and I headed over to the table. SK, Japan and Canada were also there. I guess Ukraine was

busy–she seemed to be really busy these days.

As soon as he sat down, Ame began re-telling his story to the group. When he was done, Canada slapped his brother on his head. "You dumb *beau cave.* I swear you just want to have another fight with Russia," he lamented, giving the rest of us the '*see what I have to deal with?*' look. "Yea and it'll be so worth it!" Ame grinned. Japan rolled her eyes at his childishness while SK continued to eat his noodles quietly, as if he was watching a movie. Italy chuckled as he piped in, "I mean, I've got to agree with Ame. That ice-block can't take a joke at all!"

"HA! Take that 'Nada! One point to Eagles!" Ame shot finger guns at his brother. Canada slammed his head against the table in defeat. SK set down his chopsticks as he turned his attention to me. "How did the treatment go?" he asked. Everyone turned in unison to look at me, the same expectant look on their faces. I let out a nervous laugh, "Er...it...it went well. I don't remember much about it to be honest."

"Did the nightmares stop?" Canada asked.

"Well Nurse WHO said I slept uninterrupted and I don't recall having any nightmares last night so I guess that's a good indicator."

Everyone nodded in approval and Italy clapped me on the back. "Congrats Poland!" he smiled. I smiled back before quietly adding, "Well, the bulk was done by Germany." Ame's face shifted imperceptibly and I could tell he was holding himself back from voicing out his opinions. "Speaking of him, where is he?" Italy asked, "I haven't seen him the whole day. "Last I saw him, he was in my class, nodding off to sleep."

"Ah, I guess the treatment must have drained him of his energy," Italy muttered, "I guess I'll just catch him tomorrow then. Oh, Poland, maybe you could inform him that I'm looking for him?" I nodded, making a mental note. Japan looked a bit worried but didn't say anything. *Is she worried about Germany?* Well, the two were relatively good friends–at least in my eyes–so I supposed it made sense for her to worry about him.

"Why do you need to talk to Germany?" Canada asked curiously.

"I need to ask him about something. It's to do with Arts Appreciation Week," as soon as he said that, the whole table groaned loudly.

Italy shrugged, "Come on, it isn't *that* bad." We all shot him a dirty look and Italy raised his hands in mock surrender. "You don't find it bad because you find it enjoyable but for the majority, it sucks," Japan grumbled and I nodded in agreement. Arts Appreciation Week was the *worst* programme the school ever invented. During the week, we were often tasked to do analysis on different artworks–from the five different artforms (visual, literary, musical, theatrical and dance). It was extremely boring and most of the school hated it. Still, the programme had never been scrapped as UN had always felt that it was an integral part of the "Pangea Preparatory Academy experience" as he had dubbed it. Furthermore, the programme was heavily supported by most kingdoms so there wasn't much that we could do. Did I ever mention that Italy's kingdom, the Kingdom of Historia, even pumped a ton of money into the programme? No? Well now you know.

We continued to squabble over the issue, until Italy decided to admit defeat. "Fine, fine, fair enough. I suppose the programme *can* be a tad boring," he rolled his eyes good naturedly as we finished our dinner. I grinned and high-fived SK who sat next to me.

After dinner, I returned back to my dorm room. SK, Canada and America had gone to the library to do work while Japan and Italy decided to meet up with some other friends of theirs. When I got back to my dorm, I saw that Singapore's room was dark while Germany's one was brightened. His door was ajar, allowing me a sneak peek into his room. *Jeez, it's so plain and boring.* At least my room had some *pizazz* to it. Germany's one looked as if it was just a prison cell–abelit more comfortable. There was no personality to it, as if no one lived there. Then again, Germany's personality was really flat and boring so I guess it wasn't too far of a stretch to have a plain and boring room for him at least.

Germany emerged from his room dressed in a plain white shirt with

a black jacket and grey sweatpants. "Hello Poland," he tried to smile but it looked awkward and he quickly stopped. "How come you're back early?" he asked.

"I need to finish up the math homework ASEAN gave. And then read up for history class."

"Ah I see. Well, good luck then. Some of the questions were very challenging."

I groaned internally while thanking him. *Damn it. And here I was hoping I'd be able to get it done quickly.* I dumped my satchel onto the bed, deciding to procrastinate a bit by showering first. When I was done, I took a deep breath, steadying my nerves for a night of pain and torture.

*

"UGH!" I slammed my head down on the table. "Why the hell is this so difficult?" I was on the verge of ripping up my book in anger. I had taken a "break" to study for history after realising I was not making any progress on my math homework for an hour. I started work at 7pm and it was now almost 9.30pm. Frustration gnawed at me and I glared at my math book.

Knock! Knock! I looked up, my door opening to reveal Germany. His hair was slightly messy, as if he just woke up. "I heard screams. Is everything okay?" he asked, his accent prominent. I shivered, recalling how TR's heavily-accented voice would grate my ears every time he spoke. *He's already gone, Polska. He can't harm you,* I reminded myself, not wanting to fall into the rabbit hole of traumatic memories–even if one figure from my past was currently standing in front of me. *Germany is...nice anyways. He helped you overcome the bad nightmares.*

"I...it's just the math homework is killing me. I don't get it at all," I admitted to him. Germany's eyes widened, "I thought you were good at math?"

"Well...I wasn't really paying attention in class today so...hehehe," I chuckled weakly, rubbing my neck sheepishly.

"I can help you if you want."

I looked at Germany, stunned, not sure if I heard right. "Aren't you tired? From the treatment–Oh, thank you so much by the way–damn it why do I always forget to thank people errr..." I was beginning to ramble.

"I fell asleep earlier so I still have enough energy to stay awake," Germany interjected, "So I can help you if you want."

I thought about it for a moment before nodding. "Thanks," I smiled softly as he came to my side. I got up and gestured for him to sit in the chair while I sat on my bed. Once we shifted, I plopped the book between us. Germany scanned through the question, tapping his finger against his thigh. After a minute, he broke into a smile. "Oh this one, it's pretty simple," he said. "It's not really a complex numbers question but more on algebra. So you substitute here," he pointed, directing me on what to do.

Germany's explanations were simple and concise allowing me to easily understand how to solve the questions. Before I knew it, I only had three left. "Ah *Verdammt*, these are the tricky ones," Germany grimaced, rubbing his eyes before returning to look back at the page.

"You should go to bed if you're tired."

Germany shook his head, stifling a yawn. "No, I'm fine, I can still help you. Unless you want to sleep already then we can stop," he looked at me in concern, "You probably should get some sleep though..." He trailed off, rubbing his eyes again. "Well, I'm fine right now. But maybe we can continue this tomorrow? That way you can get some sleep," I suggested and he shook his head, insisting he help me. I sighed internally knowing that there was no way to change his mind. It was probably the strongest trait that he shared with TR, both of them were insanely stubborn. Then again, that (could I even call him a man?) guy was insane so maybe not really. *But Queen Prussia's also really stubborn too. Hmmm, I guess it runs in the family.*

Germany snapped his fingers in front of my face to get my attention. Snapping out of my thoughts, I apologised for spacing

out. He shook his hair out of his eyes, telling me it was fine. We continued to work on the questions even until the curfew bell rang (for the record, curfew is at 11pm). I noticed Germany sometimes dozing off before he'd snap himself to reality whenever he had to wait for me to finish writing the answers. After another half hour of work, I had finally finished my math homework. I grinned in triumph, silently celebrating.

"Thank you *Niemcy* for helping me out."

"It was my pleasure. Good," Germany stifled a yawn, "Good night." He was about to leave when I quickly grabbed his wrist. He turned around, looking a bit baffled. "I...I just wanted to thank you again for helping me out today and with my nightmares. You didn't have to after how I acted towards you but you still did. So thank you," I smiled gratefully at him as his posture relaxed.

"It was nothing. I...it's true in a way I owe you after what my," he swallowed, "After what Third Reich did to you." My skin crawled at the mention of his name but I decided to ignore it. "I...I...while treating you...I meant your...subconscious and," Germany continued slowly, piquing my interest and fear. *What did he see?* I knew from the mental checks Papa made me undergo annually, that my mind was a fragile place and that for most memories of my childhood, I had locked them away. Well, that was what the telepath Papa employed said anyway. "I...I...I'm so sorry Poland. I never knew what you went through and I...I cannot apologise enough for what my father did to you. I'm so sorry," Germany bursted out, shocking me, "I saw the memories. Not all of them of course but...it was bad...horrible and I can't believe my people did that to you. I'm sorry for not standing up earlier and I'm sorry for being such a horrible person and–"

I placed a hand on the shaking German's shoulder. He gasped, slowly trailing off. "I'm so sorry," he rasped, sinking onto the ground. I knelt down next to him and took his shoulders, twisting so that he faced me. "Look," I sighed, "What...Third did to me and my people was horrible and I swore to myself never forgive you or your kingdom." Germany nodded and was about to say something when I continued, "But. But I think it's time to let go some of my hate. I mean...I can't possibly hold onto the hate forever can I?" I

smiled gently just like how my father did to some of our subjects.

Germany sniffled and murmured, "I was a coward...no I'm a coward. I...I didn't help you because I was scared but I should have–"

"Shhhh. That's in the past. Can we not let this affect our future relationship with one another please? Please?" I forced Germany to look at me, holding out my pinky finger, "Promise?" He sighed, looking away before nodding. I forced his face to face me and held my pinky to his face. "Pinky promise me on that."

"What are we? 5?" Germany retorted even as he hooked his finger around mine. Our thumbs briefly touched before we released our hands. "Hey, even my dad does that sometimes with our staff," I joked, "And he's old." I saw the barest of smiles flit across Germany's face but before I could confirm it, the smile had vanished. Helping me up, he thanked me once again before wishing me a good night.

"Good night Poland."

"Good night Germany."

Translations:

Америка--America

beau cave--total idiot (this is from Quebec French)

Verdammt--Damn it

Niemcy--Germany

A/N: AND THAT'S A WRAP! WE ARE OFFICIALLY DONE WITH ACT 1!

***dances like a happy duck* Hopefully this wasn't too rushed for y'all.**

And what's this? Double update week? Limitedtimeofferonlyt&capply

I'm really excited to start on Act 2 and this is where most of the

action happens. And look, Germany and Poland are friends now! XD (My baby boys [not literally] are growing up)

MOVING ON!!! QUESTION TIME AMIGOS!

1) When will Poland *finally* realise that Germany has been trying to help him all along?

2) Should I do a "break" chapter where we get back to Singa's view?

3) What are some childhood shows you remember watching as a kid?

I used to watch Ben and Holly, Peppa Pig (Goddamnit, now I make fun of the show), Jake and the Neverland pirates, Sofia the first and Paw Patrol. Oh! How could I forget my Korea animated shows? Robocar Poli, Tayo Tayo and Tobot! (Bro, Tobot is still one of the best shows I ever watched)

Okay, see you guys soon!

A Singaporean's Diary

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

(I am so sorry for the crappy quality. I had to screenshot the thing from Canva)

Meltdown

[image]

[image]

[image]

"Hey Singa!" I slammed my journal's cover down when Malaysia (or Mal) popped his head into my room. "Have you ever heard of knocking?!" I snapped, glaring at my older brother. He raised his hands in mock surrender, rolling his eyes.

"Jeez Singa. You're on your period or what? Why so snappy today?" he muttered. My shoulders slumped and I sighed loudly. "Sorry," I murmured guilty, my heart getting heavier. Mal entered my room, a small frown on his face. "Did something happen between you and Germany again?" he asked in a concerned tone. I shook my head, reassuring him that everything was going well. He sat on my bed, much to my annoyance, and clasped his hands, leaning forward. He had his '*we are going to talk about your problems*' face on.

"We are *not* going to have a talk. Come on, let's go for dinner now and you can tell me what you wanted to tell me earlier," I got up from my seat and opened my door. Mal didn't move and continued to look at me. "Come on Mal. I heard that they have *Laksa* today. Don't you like it?" I looked at my brother, forcing a smile onto my normally stoic face.

"We won't leave until you tell me what's going up. Did something happen?"

"It's *really* nothing. I'm just tired, that's all," I insisted, "Come on now. The others must be waiting for us."

"It's not nothing. I've entered your room in that manner a hundred times and you've never snapped at me the way you did today. Something's up and I want to know what it is," Mal got up, hands

akimbo. I groaned loudly, feeling my frustration build. "Please Singa," he added after a moment. I shook my head but he still persisted.

We continued like this for another few minutes until I finally snapped. "FINE! YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE HELL IS SO F**KING WRONG?! WELL I'LL TELL YOU! IT'S THE FACT THAT I FEEL SO DAMN USELESS! I WAS SUPPOSED TO HELP WITH POLAND AND GERMANY'S FRIENDSHIP BUT IN THE END ALL I DID WAS MAKE IT WORSE BEFORE IT GOT BETTER! IT WASN'T EVEN MY–"

"Shhhhhhh," Mal's finger was on my lips, silencing me. He wrapped me in a fierce hug whispering, "You aren't useless Singa. If anything you...are...are you crying?" He was right. Sobs wracked my body as the dam of emotions finally broke. I blubbered incoherently, burying my head in his chest. He hugged me tighter, not saying a word. "I just feel so useless. Like what am I even doing here? What makes Papa even think I'm capable of being a mediator between the two?! All I did was get myself injured!" I continued to rant between sobs, my body shaking like a leaf. Mal just stood there, rubbing circles on my back, staying silent.

"I'm so tired of acting like this adult figure! I'm only 16 for god sake! My childhood was already ripped from me and ever since then, I've been forced to grow! It's not fair! Why do you and the others get to act like kids and I have to act more mature!" Mal's grip tightened as he patted my hair soothingly. He began to softly sing another song Papa (my real one) used to sing to us.

"*Rasa sayang hey, rasa sayang sayang hey, hey, lihat nona jauh, rasa sayang sayang, hey,"* the more I heard him sing, the calmer I felt.

After a while, I slid onto the ground, wrapping my arms around myself as Mal sat in front of me. We sat in silence for a while as he took my hand, using his thumb to trace circles on it. It was soothing and helped ground me.

"Feeling better now you've got all that out?" Mal asked, looking at me. I nodded tiredly, smiling at him. "Thank you for not saying anything and just letting me rant. It helped a lot," I wiped the

excess tears off my face. He chuckled and ruffled my hair–just like how my father used to when I was younger. However, his lighthearted expression dimmed and it became serious as he took my hands.

"Singa, I just want to say, you aren't useless okay?"

"But I feel–"

"Shhhhh," Mal stopped me from going any further, "Just listen finish okay?" I nodded as he scrunched up his eyebrows trying to remember what he was going to say. "Like I said, you aren't useless. I'm not going to go into some sappy shit but I want you to know that I'm here for you and so are the rest of our siblings. And come on, you probably helped one way or another with Germany and Poland's case. Look at the positives. Maybe getting injured was the only way the two would become...well not really friends...er...frenemies? Frenemies yeah, that's the word. So see, maybe you helped after all!"

I looked down at the ground, reflecting on Mal's words. Maybe he was right...*maybe I need to look at things differently*. He took my hand and held it. "*Abang* is sorry as well. From now on I'll try to be a bit more mature, okay?" he looked at me and I could see the heartache in his eyes. But before I could say anything else, he turned away. Patting me on the back, he got up to stretch. I heard a popping sound before he sighed in content.

"Come on, let's go for dinner now," he helped me up. I hugged him again–much to his surprise–but he quickly hugged back. "Thanks *Abang*," I murmured. I could almost hear his grin as he ruffled my hair. "*Tiada masalah adik*," he replied as he released me, "Come on. Thai's probably about to send a search party for us soon." I smirked ever so slightly at the thought as Mal dragged me out of my room.

*

"There you are! I was going to send Cammie and Laos to find you two. What took you guys so long?" Thailand asked the second we reached the table. Mal rubbed his neck sheepishly and apologised. Viet gave me a concerned look as she asked, "Were you crying

earlier Singa? Your eyes are kinda puffy and red."

"Eye irritation. Made me tear up a little," I told her. She didn't look convinced but didn't press any further. I took a seat next to Brunei and Timor. Brunei hugged me tightly. I chuckled softly, ruffling her hair. "*Abang* Mal didn't make you cry did he?" Timor raised his eyebrows, shooting a look at Mal. I snickered under my breath before replying, "Nah, my room's just really dusty and it's irritating my eyes." My two younger siblings didn't look like they truly believed me but nodded anyway.

All around the table, we were having our own mini conversations. As dinner ended, Viet stood up along with Thai. She cleared her throat, rapping her hand against the wooden table. We fell silent as Thai smiled brightly. "All right guys, Dad wants us to meet him in his office so let's all head over now okay?" he told us. We nodded and got up from our seats. As we walked to Papa's office, we discussed why he would want us to meet him. "Maybe we really are going to the Kingdom of Silk for the holidays!" Laos squealed as we reached his office.

Viet knocked on the door 3 times before it opened. "Hey D—I mean, good evening Professor EU!" Viet hurriedly bowed, greeting Prof. EU. He waved a hand, chuckling. "Good to see you all. Go on in, I was just leaving. ASEAN's excited to see you kids," he stepped aside, allowing us to see Papa. He smiled and waved at us. We streamed in and rushed over to hug him. "All right, time for you guys to let go of me now," he chuckled. We sat down in the comfy couches, waiting for him to continue.

"You guys probably know this already but we'll all be heading to the Kingdom of Silk during the week long holiday," we all cheered but Papa's serious look soon quietened us. "Unfortunately, for the most part, I won't be able to be with you. I have to discuss something with Emperor Qing and I'll be at his palace for most of the trip. I wasn't supposed to bring you guys along but I managed to get permission. China will be following our entourage—or more like we'll be following him," he continued. Phil and Viet grimaced—they didn't like China a lot. Most people in my family didn't really like him much. If anything, I was the only one who had a good relationship with him.

"Sorry kids. But on our first and last two days in the kingdom, I'll be free so we can all hang out together. And we'll be staying there for a week–we'll leave on Thursday afternoon and reach there Friday morning so we have some time to spend together!" Papa tried to keep an upbeat tone to lighten the mood but it wasn't really working. Thai forced a smile as he said, "Awesome! I can't wait for our trip!" We nodded along, although our excitement was much more subdued. I saw Myan cross his arms, his mouth moving although no sound came out. Judging by his expression, I suspected that he was cursing.

Papa ASEAN tried to converse with us more but his earlier statement had dimmed down our excitement. After half an hour, he finally gave up and said we could go back to our rooms. "Good night Papa," our reply felt subdued and muted. Papa smiled, although it felt forced. We slowly left one by one. I was one of the last few to leave and I saw him slumping in his seat.

We didn't have much to discuss anymore so we all headed back to our dorm rooms. I walked back to my dorm room with Mal. We didn't talk much, both of us deep in our thoughts. "Er...so...how is it living with Kazakhstan and Mexico?" I asked him. Mal's eyes lit up, "It's going really well to be honest. But Mex and Kaz aren't really talking too much. Well, I mean they have different interests and Kaz usually gets dragged away by his sister so, yea." I nodded, "At least you guys aren't fighting. Unlike a *certain* group." Mal snickered under his breath just as we reached his dorm.

"You mean America and China don't you?" he asked.

"Who else could I be referring to?"

"Point taken," he said as he entered his dorm room, "Good night Singa. Sleep well ya?" I nodded and bid him good night before leaving.

*

When I got back to my dorm room, Poland was sitting on the ground with Germany playing some card game. *Oh, it's Uno*, I noted with interest. Poland was the first to notice I returned and he waved

at me. "Do you want to join us next round?" he asked.

"Sure."

"Cool, we'll tell you when we're done."

"M'kay," I replied before heading to my room to take my clothing. I took a quick rinse, having showered before dinner, and changed into a new set. By the time I came out, Poland and Germany were almost done with their game.

I sat down between them as Germany was waiting patiently for Poland to give a colour. "Er...blue?" the Polish said, eyes filled with hope. A ghost of a smile passed over Germany's lips as he slapped down a blue card. "And I win," he announced in his monotonous voice although I detected a hint of pride. Poland huffed as he collected the cards, shuffling them.

"How on earth did you even win?" he huffed as he dealt out 7 cards to us each. Germany shrugged as he casually commented, "Berlin and I used to play this a lot when I was 10." Poland nodded sagely, "That explains a lot. Well, then, Singapore, I hope you will beat Germany this round." I smiled nervously as Germany gave me a nod.

Looking at my cards, I snickered internally. They were a good set. Poland took a card from the deck, revealing a green '8'. "Since Germany won last round, he can go first," Poland explained, "From there, we will go anti-clockwise so that means it will be Singapore's turn." Germany and I nodded as he placed down 3 cards. The colour was now red although the number remained unchanged. I groaned in disappointment as my hand reached out for the deck. Thankfully, my first card was red and I didn't have to keep taking more cards. Poland grinned when he saw the number on the card and placed down 4 cards.

We continued like this in silence until Poland shouted, "UNO!" Germany sighed loudly as he reluctantly placed down his card. I followed him, placing down a blue. Poland grinned in triumph as he slammed down his final card, "YES! I WIN!" I groaned as Germany began to quietly pack the cards into the box. "Good job," I

congratulated Poland. He thanked me and took the box from Germany.

Yawning, Germany said, "I think I'm going to bed first. See you tomorrow."

"Night Germany!" both of us replied. We sat in silence before Poland turned to talk to me. "How's school for you?" he asked me.

"Eh, it could have been worse. At least I didn't get Mr ROSCOSMOS again for Science classes. That guy was really scary," I admitted, shivering at the memory of getting yelled at by him for dozing off during class last year. (In my defence, I had barely slept the previous night.)

Poland nodded, rubbing his neck. "I'm glad I never got him. I've heard horror stories from SK and Italy. That guy is basically Russia 2.0 but worse," he told me. I grimaced and nodded. We conversed about other things until we heard the bells chime. It was 11pm.

"Well, I think I should head to bed now. Good night Poland. Thanks for letting me play with you guys," I bowed slightly. He smiled before rubbing his head sheepishly, "Hey, I know I'm a little late but I want to thank you for trying to help me and Germany. I don't think I'd ever have tried to move on if you didn't try to help. So thanks."

His smile warmed my heart and I felt tears come to my eyes. "No...no...no problem," I quickly wiped them away before he could see them. Bidding Poland good night, I returned back to my room and laid on my bed. For the first time, I finally felt liberated from the heavy burden I carried.

Things aren't so bad after all I guess.

Translations:

Rasa sayang hey,

rasa sayang sayang hey,

hey, lihat nona jauh, r

asa sayang sayang, hey:

I feel love, hey!

I feel love, love, hey!

Hey, see that girl over there,

I feel love, hey!

Abang--elder brother

Tiada masalah adik--No problem little brother

A/N:

Wow, what a emotional chapter! =)

Also Uno exist because...I want it to.

Anyhoooo, I swear in every character I've made, I can see hints of my personality in them ;-;. I dunno...is this bad? *shrugs*

ALL RIGHT! QUESTION TIME KIDS!!!

1) Is ASEAN a bad dad?

2) Why do you think Myanmar had a stronger reaction (yes, he was cussing) to ASEAN's announcement?

3) How can I improve my writing?

Also, for those who haven't seen my recent announcement, here it is.

I'm on Archive of Our Own now!!! Under the same name: Eli_jah_Watt. Honestly, the content on that site is basically the same minus A/Ns. Lmao, maybe I'll think of doing something different there ;-;. All right, time for me to go now!

See you peeps soon!!!

Back after a break

[image]

Singapore had not been with us for most of the half term break since he had returned to the Kingdom of Silk to spend the holiday with his family. Poland had tried to get me to engage with his friend group multiple times but after the first two (extremely awkward) times, I politely explained that I wasn't comfortable with "intruding" on his personal relationships. He stopped asking me after that incident so for the most part of the break, I was able to spend time alone in the library reading or studying. It was rather nice to be honest. Alas all good things must come to an end. The half term break went by in a flash and soon, it was back to school.

RINGGGGGGGGGGGGGGGG~ I slammed a hand on my alarm clock and sighed. *The torture continues.* I hardly slept last night; my thoughts were just too turbulent. Rubbing my eyes, I trudged to the toilet to wash up. When I came out, I saw Poland sitting quietly on the couch. "*Guten Morgen* Poland," he looked up and smiled.

"Morning Germany," his cheerful expression faded, "Did you sleep at all last night?"

I gave a sheepish smile before answering, "A little." Poland looked at me aghast. "What kept you up?" he asked. I shook my head and told him not to worry. He looked like he wanted to ask further but was stopping himself. "Well, I hope you will survive today. You have training later right?" he cocked his head. I nodded, stifling a yawn.

"Good luck then."

"Thanks," I gave him a small smile before shuffling back to my room. Once I changed into my training uniform, I grabbed my satchel and made sure I had everything. Running my hand through my hair, I took a deep breath to steady my nerves. *Everything will be fine Germany. Things are better now.* I repeated my mantra over and

over, pacing back and forth. I mean, I wasn't completely wrong. Ever since I had helped Poland, people had begun to talk to me and they seemed a little less scared. Of course there were still the haters but it wasn't something I couldn't handle. To be honest, talking to people seemed worse compared to the haters. Hah, I guess I could blame it on my social awkwardness.

As I was leaving the dorm, Singapore stepped out of his room. He was already dressed in his uniform and looked like he was leaving too. "Morning Germany!" he greeted me cheerfully. I greeted him back before asking, "I thought you were still asleep?"

"Nope, I woke up earlier so I decided to prepare first. Are you going now?" I nodded in response.

"Oh, do you want to walk together?"

"Sure."

As we walked through the hallways, we shared about our holidays. I didn't have much to say so it was mainly Singapore talking. "Have you ever been to the Kingdom of Silk?" he asked, "Their library is so cool!" I shook my head before explaining, "I don't really travel out of my kingdom too much apart for school. Although I do vaguely remember going to Historia during the war."

Singapore 'ohhh-ed' silently before excitedly telling me that I should make a trip down to the Kingdom of Silk one day. "The culture there is amazing!" he smiled fondly, "And most locals are friendly. Just...just don't go into the gambling sector." He shivered as fear clouded his eyes, "That's where the gangs and...stuff are at." By stuff, he meant drugs. Unfortunately for the Kingdom of Silk, despite the colourful culture they had, underneath that layer laid a past tainted by blood and drugs. Most of the lower class often fell into the trap of becoming addicted to drugs–specifically opium–to ease their suffering and pain. It was only until recently that their Emperor started to stamp out the use of it. Even then, many still took it since the rules were never really that enforced. (To be very honest, it's probably because the government still wishes to earn money from the sale of opium. Banning it would affect them heavily.)

"Are you from the Kingdom of Silk? You seem to know the place extremely well," I commented. Singapore nodded, a fond smile on his face. "Perhaps I'll be able to see you there one day. I'll make sure to bring you around if you do," he seemed extremely excited and I didn't have the heart to tell him that it would be almost impossible with my guards surrounding me at all times. Instead, I politely thanked him. We continued to converse with him asking questions about my kingdom. Internally, I was wincing at my lack of knowledge of the "famous" places. Then again, it wasn't as if many people came to our kingdom for leisure. If anything, the most "famous"–or rather infamous– place would have been the castle which is where Oma and I lived. And maybe Cologne Palace in the capital. It was the largest building in all of West Pangea and the tallest double tower structure in the whole of Pangea. It used to serve as a palace for royalty hundreds of years ago, long before the Kingdom of Darkness ever formed. Its long history was a reason it attracted people to go there–assuming they even dared to come to the kingdom. It also sheltered thousands of citizens during the war.

"Well, it was nice talking to you Germany. See you around!" Singapore bid goodbye when we reached the dining hall. I watched him walk over to his siblings as one of them threw a hairy fruit at him. He managed to catch it in time as everyone cheered. Someone patted him on the back as they began talking.

I sighed and was ready to depart the dining hall when I heard Italy call me. He grinned and waved at me. "Germany! Over here!" he bounded over to me and grabbed me by my sleeve. I scowled as he dragged me towards the table. Japan, Canada, America, South Korea and Ukraine were sitting there. Japan waved to me to sit next to her as Italy let go of my sleeve. I adjusted it before standing awkwardly. "What are you waiting for? Go sit next to Japan!" Italy nudged me.

"But...America–"

"He's cool with it."

"Was this Poland's idea?"

Italy decided not to reply as he shoved me forward. I slowly sat

next to Japan who was opposite South Korea. Italy sat next to him as he took out a piece of paper. "What do you guys want?" he asked, holding a pencil over his paper. Canada groaned and put his head in his hands as South Korea gave him a disgusted look. "Please don't try to magic food up. It tastes like cardboard," he told Italy. In response, he gasped dramatically and held his chest. "You did not," his eyes widened as South Korea stood up to get food. All of us did the same as Italy wailed, "Come on! I swear I've got it this time!"

I chuckled under my breath as we all headed to find some food. Just as we did, Poland came in. He spotted America and bounded over in a way that reminded me of a cat. When he spotted me, he raised an eyebrow before breaking into a smile. "Nice to see you're not having breakfast alone today," he told me. I nodded, unsure if I should feel offended or not. I mean...it wasn't like I had anyone who wanted to eat with me...

When we got back to our table, Italy was casually eating some tomato soup with pasta. He seemed to enjoy it judging by the pleased expression on his face. On the table was the paper and pencil he brought out earlier. However, there was now a drawing of a bowl of soup with some pasta bits. "Is it nice?" I asked, setting my tray down. Behind me, South Korea screamed, "ARE YOU ACTUALLY HAVING THAT?!" Italy nodded as he hurriedly drew something on the paper. Muttering something under his breath, a new shiny silver spoon popped out of the page. Such was the ability Fabrication (or Artwork Genesis as Italy would call it). Scooping some soup out, he presented it to South Korea who leaned away in disgust. "Come on, don't make me spoon-feed you South!" he teased.

"Oh come on Italy! If the guy doesn't want to eat your food, don't force him!" Japan said, her cat ears raising up defensively as she set her tray down. "Awwww, no fun!" Italy grumbled as South Korea sat back down, shooting a look of thanks to Japan. "Ger, you want it?" I accepted the spoon just as America, Poland and Canada came back.

America stared at me like I was an alien. "You're not actually going to drink that right?" he asked me. "I am," I told him before sticking the spoon into my mouth. It tasted like...paper? I swallowed it, certain that disgust was showing on my face. "Italy..." everyone fell

silent, wanting to hear my verdict.

"South Korea's right. It tastes like cardboard."

The table went wild as South Korea did a little victory dance. "HA! TAKE THAT!" he laughed in triumph. Italy made a face but I could see his shoulders trembling as he tried to hide his mirth. People around us shot us looks but didn't say anything although I noticed a few whispering about me. My skin crawled but I ignored it.

Once everyone calmed down, we began to eat. "*Itadakimasu!/*잘먹겠습니다*!(jal meoggessseubnida!)*" Japan and South Korea said before tucking in. The conversation went around the table but I kept quiet most of the time, periodically answering Japan, South Korea, Poland or Italy's questions. Canada and America didn't converse much with me although I noticed the brothers shooting strange glances. I felt uncomfortable and my stomach churned.

Finally, breakfast ended and I could leave. Thanking everyone for letting me join them, I departed for class with America and Poland. We entered the classroom, the pair still talking. Russia saw me and waved to me. I pretended not to have seen it and noticed his crest-fallen expression. As I took a seat, he leaned towards me. "I waved to you earlier. Did you not see?" his tone seemed sad but I knew it was anything but that.

"Must have missed it," I answered back curtly. He rolled his eyes but didn't press any further as he returned to his desk. A few minutes later, Ms NASA walked in. "Class stand!" Finland's monotonous voice rang throughout the class.

"Good morning Ms NASA!"

"Good morning y'all!" she smiled brightly, "Today's class is about chemical equations. Now I'm sure..." I tuned her out, leaning my head against the table. I made sure to turn away from Russia's burning gaze–out of sight, out of mind. Ms NASA went through the lesson and I took notes from time to time. Other than that, I didn't pay particular attention since it was something I had previously gone through.

"Finland, could you answer this question please?"

He stood up, his long frame casting a shadow in the classroom as he slunk to the front. He looked at the board before writing an answer. "You're missing something here. Can anyone tell me what he is missing?" Ms NASA looked around the class before pointing to Laos, "Yes, Laos?"

"The state symbols are missing."

"Good job! Finland, can you write the state symbols please?" he quickly wrote them down, pink tinting his cheeks before hurrying back to his seat. Ms NASA called a few other students to solve her chemical equations before handing out a worksheet. "I want to collect this after class so get started please. You have 30 minutes," she instructed us. I got to work and within 15 minutes, finished it. I walked up to hand it over before going back to my seat and laying my head on the table. My mind drifted as I lazily glanced around the classroom. The faint sound of ticking could be heard along with the sound of pens scratching against the surface of paper lulled me into a light trance. However, I was soon rudely shaken out of my daydream by a cough.

"Germany–"

"What the hell is it you want?" I gave a death glare at Russia and I noticed him shrinking away slightly. "I just wanted to ask you how were your holidays?" he continued after a moment. I turned away, burying my head into my arms. "Why do you care?" my voice came out muffled. I heard a sniff as he replied, "Why can't I ask a friend how they are?"

I slowly raised my head and laughed harshly. "A friend? Russia, have you already forgotten what I told you? I *don't* want to be your friend. Please, this is your final warning, stop trying to engage with me," Russia looked at me impassively although his eyes told a different story.

"Very well," was all he said before falling silent. It felt icy–just like Russia's demeanour–and it made me shift in discomfort. He studied the class with his grey eyes. They moved around, his gaze

calculative. I didn't like it one bit. A sick feeling welled within me and I could see a few of my classmates shift around. *Is he using his ability? But that's not–*

"All right! All those who aren't done, please pass up your worksheet now!" Ms NASA's voice scared me and I flinched. There were a few sighs as the screech of chairs grated against my ears. Once she had checked that all the papers were submitted, she smiled and released us from class. We thanked her just as Prof. EU came in. He conversed with Ms NASA for a minute before entering the class.

"Get out your history book! Today we are learning about the older kingdoms!" he instructed us after we greeted him. My eyes glittered as I sat a little straighter in my seat. This was going to be fun.

Translations:

Guten Morgen--Good morning

Itadakimasu!---to humbly recieve

잘먹겠습니다*!*---I am going to eat well.

A/N: Yay! More world building! Also, we have officially entered Act/Part 2 of this book! I intend to focus back to the threat more and maybe have them travel through different kingdoms or something but we'll see.

I have to much talking in this chapter TnT.

For those who don't get the reference, Cologne Palace is based off Cologne Cathedral in Germany. I chose it because in the article, it is the Germany's most frequented landmark and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Also, it's built in a gothic style so I thought it is fitting for the Kingdom of Darkness.)

Another (can I call it that?) historical reference in the mention of opium in the Kingdom of Silk (KoS). Since KoS is based off China, I decided to reference the illegal opium trade in 19th century China.

ALSO! WE HIT 3K!!! Whooooo! :D 2K more till I hit 5K reads. Now on to the questions.

1) Are you a writer and artist?

2) What do you think the characters in this book sound like? I might do voice claims at the next Q&A.

3) What should I name Part 2 of this book?

Okay, bye y'all!

Edit: I just realised it's been a year since I've been in the CH fandom. Woah, time flies man. Also, it's gg to be one year since I got my wattpad acc soon.

Combat Class

[image]

"JUST A MINUTE LONGER!" my instructor encouraged me. I strained to hear his voice against the roaring of blood in my ears. Sweat dripped down my face and the room felt unbelievably hot. *Just hold out a little longer,* I repeated my mantra as my body shook. "5...4...3...2...1!" as soon as he had reached the last number, I flopped onto the ground as my ability died out. I gasped for air as my instructor wrote something down in his chart.

"Good job Poland! You held out much longer today," he grinned, looking pleased. I raised a thumbs up, too exhausted to speak. Ever since I had been given the all clear to do normal training, my instructor had not held back, making me train twice as hard. It was extremely tiring but I knew I needed to catch up. He scribbled some comments before looking at his watch. "Well, that's all for today. Get some rest and I'll see you tomorrow," he patted me on my back as I peeled myself off the ground. I thanked him and got ready to leave before he stopped me.

"Ah, I forgot to mention this earlier but tomorrow's lesson will be a combined class with Kazakhstan. His instructor won't be around tomorrow so I'll be taking him," he explained. I nodded, wiping the sweat off my face with a towel. I waved goodbye to him as I exited the training room. The sky was a lovely shade of pinkish orange and I could see a few birds heading back to their nests.

I wish I could be with them. I felt an ache in my chest as I watched the birds soar through the sky. *If only I had my wings...* I smiled sadly, as I recalled the first year post-war.

*

I was huddled next to my father as we looked out into the starry sky. He

smoothed my hair back, pecking my forehead lightly. "Polska, it's time to sleep, come on, Łódź will bring you to your room," he told me gently. I shook my head, clinging onto him. "No! I want to stay with you!" I gave him a stubborn look and he chuckled softly.

"Papa will be staying up very late though. You need sleep. Tomorrow your lessons are starting aren't they? Surely you don't want to fall asleep during the classes."

"But I'm scared of the nightmares!" I cried, hugging my father tightly. He rubbed circles on my back before tapping me. "Look Polska, look, there's a meteor shower. Come on, let's make some wishes. Maybe they'll chase away those monsters!" he turned me around, clasping our hands together, "I wish..." I couldn't hear about the rest of his sentence but followed along. Shutting my eyes tightly, I thought about my wish.

'I wish to have my wings back.'

As the stars fell, I continued to make some more wishes. After a while, they subsided. The last star fell, concluding the end of the meteor shower. I turned to Papa, curiosity in my eyes. "Papa, what did you wish for?" I asked. He smiled, ruffling my hair. "Papa can't say anything otherwise the wish won't come through," he told me. I 'ohh-ed' and mimed zipping my mouth. He smiled, hugging me tightly.

He held onto me for a while longer before ruffling my hair. "Okay okay, now you really should go to bed. Łódź!" a young servant came in, bowing. "Yes, Your Majesty?" she asked politely. "Could you bring Polska to bed please? Maybe read him a bedtime story if you can?" he told her, passing me over. He pecked my forehead again as he whispered good night to me. "Behave okay?" he told me, "Don't make Łódź's life hard." I nodded, making a pinkie promise. Łódź 'awww-ed' at my actions, a fond smile on her face. She carried me out of the room and brought me to my room where she set me in my bed, tucking me in. Grabbing a book, she began to softly read out the story.

"Once upon a time, there lived a dragon and prince..."

I shook myself out of the reverie, slightly shocked that the sky was already dark. *Man, I need to stop spacing out.* Despite losing my wings, I still longed to be in the sky. The first few years post-war, I

used to stay in my bedroom, staring out into the sky with Papa, longing to touch the clouds. I never told anyone this but whenever I saw shooting stars, I would always wish on them, praying to the heavens that my wings would regrow. Even till now, I still would make the same wish even though I knew that it would never come through.

A glint of silver caught my eye and I turned to face the window. 'Huh a meteor shower, how coincidental,' I thought, feeling my hands clasping together. My lips moved although my voice never came out.

'I wish for my wings to reappear one day.'

When I was done, I proceeded to watch the rest of the meteor shower. However, something about it made my insides twist and turn. It felt as if this was a bad omen–but that couldn't be the case right? Once the show ended, I hurried off, an intense uncomfortable feeling within me. *Everything's okay.*

*

"How was training yesterday?" I asked Germany as we walked to the hall for Combat class with Mr NATO. It was a compulsory class that all royals had to take (optional for the other students) and was the only class where we had a few levels mixed together. For us, it was a mixed class between the year 6s to 8s. I didn't particularly like it since I had sprained myself a couple times before. It was also how America got his shoulder dislocated by Russia when they fought in that class (without NATO's approval).

"Tiring," he replied before asking, "How was yours?" I made a face and told him all that had happened during yesterday's training.

"That sounds...hard," he seemed to struggle to think of a reply. "Yea, it was but I suppose it's worth it in the end," he nodded, agreeing with my statement. We chatted about other things until we entered the hall. It was Combat class and most of my classmates were already in the hall with NATO. He was dressed in all green with a dagger strapped around his waist. He had a whistle hung around his neck and was talking animatedly to Ame.

"Ah the two of you are just in time. We can start class now," he clapped Ame on the shoulder, signalling the end of their conversation. Blowing into the whistle, he yelled, "EVERYONE TO SETTLE AROUND ME! 5...4..." Before he had reached one, everyone was seated in front of him. I was with Germany, Japan and Italy. He took attendance and frowned when he came to North Korea's name. "Where is North Korea?" he asked SK.

"I'm not sure Sir," SK replied tiredly, "Chances are he's probably ditching class again." NATO sighed and scribbled something onto the paper before continuing on. "Poland?" I raised my hand and he motioned for me to put it down before returning to look at his attendance list. After another 3 minutes or so, he finally finished marking attendance. Setting the list aside, he blew the whistle to get our attention. Once he was satisfied that we were all quiet, he began to speak.

"Today we will be focusing on using the techniques I taught you guys last lesson. Now, can anyone tell me one technique which we learned? Anyone other than America and China," he added, eyeing the two rivals who immediately glared at one another. Italy leaned close to me and was about to say something when NATO pointed to him. "Italy! Why don't you try and answer?" NATO smiled.

Italy thought for a moment before answering, "We learnt about *Sambo* and how to use it effectively to deter attacks." NATO nodded before looking expectantly around, "Any other things we learnt? Yes Germany?"

Everyone's attention was on him as he looked at the ground, muttering, "*Silat.* The deadly martial art from the Kingdom of Silk."

"Correct! We also touched on the topic of Judo and Ninjitsu but those are for another day's class. Today, I want you to focus on the fighting styles of *Sambo* and *Silat* to defeat your opponent. Try not to kill or injure your classmates too badly, okay? Alright, China and Canada will fight together..." NATO went down the list, telling us who our partner was. I tuned him out, fiddling with my fingers until I heard my own name. "Poland and Malaysia!" my blood turned cold as my gaze travelled to the side of the room. Although I knew it was my imagination, I swore that a veil of black covered my opponent.

He was talking with his brother, Myanmar, hands moving animatedly. He caught my gaze and stopped before waving. I gave a weak smile as I turned to Japan, groaning.

"Shittttt, I'm dead. There's no way I'm winning."

Germany observed the Malaysian who had now moved on to talk to Indonesia and Philippines–or more accurately squabbling with them. After a moment, he simply said, "I'm sure Malaysia will go easy on you. That's what NATO's already told him and Indonesia since they've trained in the fighting style for so long already." His statement was supposed to be reassuring but I felt even more stressed hearing it. Japan gave him a dry look, "You need to work on your emotional skills, Germs." A scowl crossed his face as he growled something in German. Italy rolled his eyes before replying, "She isn't wrong Ger. And come on, Germs is a funny nickname. You used to like it even!"

Germany crossed his arms, looking away, "Not anymore." I shifted uncomfortably, feeling like I shouldn't have been there listening to their conversation. *They are closer to Germany than you are.* Something about it made me feel a little uncomfortable and I squirmed.

"OKAY! ENOUGH TALKING! TO THE MAT WITH YOUR PARTNER NOW! WE'LL START OUR FIGHTS IN 2 MINUTES! GO! GO!" NATO hollered. I slowly got up and made my way over to Malaysia. He smiled reassuringly at me as he gave a slight bow, "Prince Poland." He was a little bit taller than me, maybe around Germany's height. I nodded and quickly told him there was no need for formalities.

We headed over to one of the mats and started stretching. *WHEEEEET!* "YOU GUYS CAN START FIGHTING WHEN I BLOW THE WHISTLE AGAIN!" he yelled. Malaysia and I headed to our respective ends of the mat and bowed. I felt myself shaking slightly and took a deep breath to steady my nerves. We locked sights with one another and I began to mentally count down.

WHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEET!

Malaysia rushed at me and I quickly evaded him, sliding my foot

out to trip him. He noticed it unfortunately and grabbed me by the hands before slamming me onto the ground. He was about to grab me in a headlock when I grappled him, slamming him next to me. He grunted as he clawed at my arms. I grinned internally but it quickly disappeared when I felt myself being lifted up. A curse escaped from my lips as Malaysia jabbed me. I gasped for air, my body radiating with pain. I somehow managed to escape his clutches and retreated to the side. Unfortunately for me, he came running towards me and I had to duck to avoid a kick to my face. I rolled and grabbed his ankle to slam him down onto the ground, making sure to use my full body weight. I elbowed him in the stomach and he grunted as we hit the floor. We continued to trade blows (or evade them in my case) however, I was beginning to tire. *I really need to end this soon,* I thought, blocking another punch from Malaysia.

"You're holding up surprisingly well," he panted, swinging a leg at me. I tried to grab it but he anticipated this and aimed for my side instead. *Germany lied. This guy is not going easy on me at all,* I fell to the ground, clutching my side which was throbbing. He was about to continue when NATO blew the whistle to signal the end of our fight.

"Shake hands and return to the front of the hall! Those who have injuries, come see me now!"

Malaysia cracked a smile as he helped me up. "Saved by NATO huh?" he joked. I gave a weak grin, clutching my ribs. His smile vanished as a concerned expression replaced it. "Are you okay? I tried not to go overboard but..." he trailed off, worry clouding his features. I waved a hand and told him I was fine. "I've had it worse. This is nothing," I lied even as I felt a sharp pain in my shoulder. His shoulders relaxed and I could see the tension dissipate away.

"Good fight," he held out his hand for a handshake. We shook hands before parting ways. I slowly headed over to the front and sat with Canada, America and SK. Canada looked worse for wear, his hair completely dishevelled and his clothing were wrinkled. A few bruises littered his pale arms and he looked completely exhausted. "China went hard on you didn't he?" I commented, sitting next to him.

"No kidding," Canada rubbed his neck, wincing in pain, "He acts like he can't hold himself up in a fight but he can pack a punch."

"Well, what do you expect? He's basically almost the king of martial arts!" SK exclaimed as he stretched his back. His hair was still styled neatly despite fighting. (I swear the Korean brothers have some special ability or something to keep their hair neat despite engaging in fights.) America rolled his eyes, cracking his knuckles, "Ha, and yet I still beat him in the last fight."

"You went away much more injured than him though," I recalled. A sour look took over his features and he made a face at me. And as if to add salt to the wound, SK added, "Admit it Ame, if it weren't because China was sick that day, you'd have lost."

Ame's glare intensified but it soon morphed into a reluctant smile. "Well, I suppose so. But I know I'd totally win right now if NATO let me against him!" he proclaimed proudly, hands behind his back.

"Aiyo, you talk too much," a shadow passed over us.

"China," America glared at his rival.

"美国."

The two stared at each other, neither willing to break gaze. In the end, China lost as he sniffed, taking a seat next to me. I froze up and shot a panicked look at my friends. America looked puzzled and he growled, "What do you want China?"

"Well, I couldn't help but overhear your conversation about our previous fight. How long ago was that? You must have been in Year 2. Ha, time flies..." he looked like he was reminiscing but who knows if it was real.

"And what does this have to do with me and my friends?"

A sickly sweet smile appeared on China's face as he clasped his hands in delight. "Ah yes, well since you claim that you can beat me now, I'd like to see you try. Next class, you and I will have a fight. Loser has to admit that they are worse than the winner," the grin on his face was terrifying and a shiver went down my spine. *Surely it*

can't be a fight for pride. Yes China was a prideful person (as was Ame) but seriously, loser admitting that the winner was better? What was he 5?

"Bet! I'll make sure your stupid smirk will be wiped off your face! I swear on my father's name!" Canada looked a little alarmed as he shook his head furiously. China nodded and bowed.

"Very well, I await our fight. Have a good day!"

We stared at each other in silence for a few moments before Canada grabbed his brother by the shoulders, shaking Ame roughly. "ARE YOU INSANE?!" he screeched causing a few heads to turn. Lowering his voice, he continued, "You are going to fight against one of the strongest people in this school. Are you insane?! And swearing it on Dad's name some more! Did you knock your head against something or what?!"

"Canada has a point Ame. This whole thing smells fishy. Is this seriously a fight for pride?" I frowned, crossing my arms.

"You better start training," SK murmured, "That guy is crazy strong. Even North lost against him and my brother hardly loses any fights." Ame laughed, slapping a hand on Canada's back. "Chill guys, have some faith in me. I'll win for sure! Trust me, that guy seems strong but I'll prove I'm stronger than him!"

We shook our heads and sighed. Ame could be really petty when he wanted to be—especially when it came to his rivals. It was good and bad in a way, on one hand, it forced him to keep his grades up but it also meant he often engaged in dumb and ridiculous bets.

"No one else has any other injuries right?" NATO surveyed the room, nodding in satisfaction, "All right, class ends here today then! Remember to practise what we learnt today. Next lesson, we'll talk more about Judo and Ninjutsu and Japan will demonstrate!" There was a round of polite applause as Japan stood up, pink dusting her cheeks as she bowed.

"I'll try to make the lesson as interesting as possible!" she promised. That earned her a few cheers. Once everyone calmed down, NATO

dismissed us. Ame made his way over to NATO, no doubt about setting up a match between him and China while the rest of us headed out to the canteen for lunch. My mouth watered thinking about the food. Combat classes always left me hungry for some reason. I guess it was the fact that I was burning calories.

Translations:

美国--*America*

A/N:

Sambo is a martial art from the Soviet-era developed for hand to hand combat. It has elements of judo and jiu jitsu along with some other wrestling and self defence techniques. However, this is a racist term in English speaking countries and so another way to spell the name is *Sombo*. (SAMBO is a Russian acronym).

Silat is a martial art originated from Southeast Asia (Nusantara) and is practiced in Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, Southern Thailand, Southern Philippines and Southern Vietnam. There are many forms and some involve the use of weapons.

(All information came from Wikipedia which was used to fact check my knowledge [at least for Silat])

I'm so sorry for the late chapter 😓. But school is ending and my break is coming up so I should be able to post again soon (haha, the next chapter is in the works as I speak) before my little break.

Oh yea, for those who haven't read my announcement, I'll be on a small break/hiatus from the 7th-18th of June because I'm travelling and have no access to my computer. But I'll be online of course so feel free to ask me questions!

Anyways, did anyone get the reference to Russian Roulette by Kai in the chapter? It was kinda small...

"Once upon a time, there lived a dragon and prince..." **Hehe, I just had to give another reference to the book. It's honestly so good though...**

Also, no questions this time round but 1234germankitty, here's a few drawings.

[image]

This one was really random but here's a few of the rulers. Kiji Japan is Neko Japan's older brother and the current ruler of the Kingdom of Dawn. He's 25 and very serious.

[image]

I swear to god I need to stop drawing him-- But the hands be handing for once though!

I also want to make it clear I don't support Russia's invasion of Ukraine (hell, I don't support any war TnT).

[image]

Erm..so for context, this was something me and my friends did in our class after school one day. I drew the person, the phone is my friend's one and the 'fk' was written by another friend. So story is that my guy is hearing toad screech and now he wanna say the f-word. Toad screeching is music to my ears. (Jkjk)**

Welp, that's pretty much it for today. Also, is it me or do I feel like my writing skills be slipping-- *stares at computer in shock*

I need to figure out how to write again--

Oh yea, sneak peek for my next book: (Disclaimer, this is a random scene I wrote. It'll probably make it into the book in the

end but it might change.)

'Finland and Ame's Bar scene'
The bar was quiet, soft jazz music playing in the background. There were few patrons at this hour–little people knew of this establishment's nighttime activities–so there was a lot of space. The people who were there were either talking to their companions over drinks or slumped on the table, no doubt having drunk more than they should have. America slid into one of the seats before he raised his hand to call over the bartender. What can I get you dear?" she asked, cleaning a glass.

"The strongest drink you have please."

The bartender gave him a strange look but shrugged. "If you say so. One Shanghai Pincer coming right up," she announced, setting down the glass on a tray. Taking a short glass cup, she got a round ice ball out before filling the glass with the clear liquid. She slid it over to America who thanked her.

"Thanks...Belarus," he said after squinting at her name tag. She bowed before hurrying over to another patron. America sighed as he took a sip of his drink. One sip became two...then three...before he knew it, he was done with his drink. His vision was a little blurry but he wasn't entirely drunk yet. But he felt a little better, his feelings a little more muted.

Ring! The bar's door swung open, jingling the little bell above it. America looked up as his eyes widened. *What the hell is Finland doing here?* He quickly ducked, shielding his face but Finland had already spotted him. Grabbing a seat next to the American, Finland waved Belarus over. "The usual please," he told her. She smiled and nodded, getting ready to prepare his drink. America took the chance to order another drink.

Giving Finland a funny look, America slurred, "I...I didn't know you drink?" Finland rolled his eyes in response before asking, "I could say the same. What are you doing here?"

"Isn't the answer obvious?"

Belarus passed Finland his drink who mouthed 'thanks' before taking a sip. He sighed in contentment before turning to face America who was chugging his drink. "Slow down or else you'll end up blackout drunk," Finland warned. America set down his drink, eyes clouded over as he gave Finland a lazy look. He wasn't completely intoxicated yet, very tipsy at the most, but another drink or so and he'd be drunk. *That would be nice,* America giggled, *I'd forget all my struggles*. Finland shook his head disapprovingly, sipping his drink slowly.

"Anyways, it's good I'm finally meeting you. What the hell is up with you and trying to quit?! Look I get the case is hard but–"

"Did my dad send you?" America glared drunkenly, raising a finger in the air. Before Finland could continue, he began his accusations, "I knew it! That old bastard...I swear I'll kill him!" He rose but was quickly held back down by Finland. An enraged look crossed America's face as he tried to fight back.

"Let me go!" he growled, pulling away.

"Absolutely not! Sit back down. The alcohol is messing with you," Finland told his junior firmly, tugging on his arm, "Think about what you are doing. Is it a *smart* decision America? Is it?" A look of lucidity crossed America's face for a second as he slowly sunk back onto his seat. Finland sighed internally, glad that disaster had been avoided. *God, if he wasn't intoxicated, I'd probably be black and blue by now.* He took another swig of his drink, vision wavering. He was about to take another sip when he heard a sniffle.

"What if we can't solve this case?"

Finland looked at America who had his head buried in his arms. "What if the victims never get their justice? How can we let that murderer bastard go scot-free?! The victims' families deserve closure but what if we can't provide that?! What if–" he was cut off by a hug. America's eyes watered as the dam holding his emotions broke.

"Shhhhhhhh, it's okay, it's okay," Finland patted his back soothingly, whispering comforting words into his ear. A few of the more lucid

patrons gave them strange looks but soon went back to drinking once Finland shot them some glares. America's tears seemed never ending as he choked, trying to breathe. "I...I...I just want...want justice...for them," he sobbed.

"I know, I know. I want that too."

"Then why the hell is nothing happening?"

Can I admit that the reason why I wanted to write this upcoming book was solely so I could finally write a drunk scene--

I told you I was insane didn't I? Also, I'm learning Russian now. It's so hard man. But I need to try!

Bye. I need to catch up on my sleep.

Trouble is brewing (1)

[image]

I rubbed my temples wearily, setting down my pen and took a sip of my coffee. It had gone cold aeons ago and tasted horrible. I drained the cup anyways, not wanting it to go to waste. *I guess some habits never change even after 30 years.* Since I was a young child, I had instilled a habit of not wasting my food. My sister, WHO, shared the same habits as me and it always annoyed us whenever we saw students wasting food. *Oh well, what can we do? They're the royalty and rich afterall.*

I swivelled my chair to face the large window behind my desk. The sun was already setting. From my viewpoint, I could see the academy's lush green garden as well as the West and South dorms. The construction for the West dorms was going splendidly and with some luck, it'd be in commission again once the mid-year break was over. In the garden, I could see a few students hanging about. Most were in the shaded areas while others were running around. *Probably the lower years.* I smiled softly to myself as I continued to observe them quietly.

It felt nice to have a break after working hard for the whole day without a break. Truthfully, I had hardly gotten any breaks ever since the schooling year started. Between researching and holding meetings about the mounting threat to Pangea, dealing with school management, Poland and Germany's issues, I'd hardly been able to rest. Don't get me started on America and Russia. Those two were the bane of my existence, constantly antagonising and fighting with one another. At least with China and America, the most the two did were exchange heated words and not fists.

I yawned, rubbing my eyes tiredly as I continued to look out of the window. I saw some of ASEAN's kids hanging out together. They were sitting in their respective groups. Myanmar was sitting with Cambodia and Laos, laughing over something while Thailand and

Vietnam were chatting with Philippines, Timor-Leste and Singapore. Indonesia, Brunei and Malaysia were nowhere to be seen. Knowing them, they were probably praying at this hour. I continued to watch them, a small smile on my face. However, the moment of peace didn't last long. A knock jolted me from my peaceful trance and I hurriedly turned back to face the door.

"Come in!" I called out, clasping my hands together.

"Good evening UN," ASEAN entered my office, carrying a large and thick file. Internally I groaned but still kept my pleasant smile on. "This file contains all the research you tasked AU and I to do on the *threat.* It also includes transcripts of my talks with Emperor Qing alongside a report from the Kingdom of Darkness," he told me, passing the file over to me. I took it from him and started flipping through it to check through the contents. When I was sure everything was there, I set it beside me.

"Thank you ASEAN. You may leave now."
"No problem. Have a good evening," he bowed before leaving. Once he was gone, I slumped in my seat, eyeing the file with resentment. I really didn't want to deal with it then but I had promised Queen Prussia that I would hand her a report on the *threat* by the end of the week. And I only had 4 days left till my deadline. *Suck it up UN. Suck it up.* Running a hand through my hair, I began my laborious task of reading through the documents.

*

"In dark and ancient lands it abides,

Chaos in its heart forever pries,

No form it takes, but power abounds,

In darkness lurking, its shadows profound.

It feeds on strife, on war's bitter song,

On chaos, fear and anger its spirit throngs.

But when allies join and peace presides,

It fades away, its power defied.

In the darkest reaches of the swamp,

It broods and waits for power to reclaim."

Knock knock! I looked up from the papers strewn messily over my table as INTERPOL came in. She frowned at me, crossing her arms. "What are you doing staying up so late? It's already 1am," she asked, taking a seat in one of the large comfy armchairs. "Ha, I could ask you the same thing," I smirked while I continued to read through the papers. I was only half way through AU and ASEAN's research. Rubbing my eyes, I stifled a yawn before stopping halfway when I saw INTERPOL setting a cup of tea on my desk.

"Whatever you annoying jackass, drink up," she ordered me before returning to her seat with a similar cup of tea in her hands. "Tch, you act as if you can't stand me but you still care," I told her as I took a sip of the tea. She rolled her eyes, as she crossed her legs. We sat in silence, the sound of paper flipping being the only sound.

"How much more do you have to do?" INTERPOL's voice cut through the peaceful silence. I looked up wearily from my desk as I showed her the remaining stack of papers I had to read. It was a combination of Queen Prussia's report and research that ASEAN and AU had painstakingly compiled. Knowing the two, I had no doubt that the two had spent countless sleepless nights trying to gather as much information as they could for me. "And I still need to write the report for Queen Prussia," I added, setting the papers down.

"You little workaholic," INTERPOL sneered as the teacup vanished from her grasp, "Your dedication to this job is borderline obsessive."

"Comes as part of the Principal package."

"Your predecessor would not agree with that. And you know that."

"Respectfully INTERPOL, my father slacked a little too much in his duties. I mean, come on, the whole point of Pangea Preparatory Academy was to prevent another huge war. Did he succeed in that? No he did not. I'm not going to let myself become like him," I told

her, bitterness coating my words. I didn't have much love for my adoptive father despite everything he had done for me and WHO. He just disappeared one day and the next thing I knew, I was thrust into this job just a few months after the 2nd Great War ended. I was merely just a budding adult and was clueless. The League of Nations (my adoptive father) had prepared some books on how to run the school but other than that I was left to fend for myself.

INTERPOL sighed loudly but said nothing. She knew that I was right. "Well, you can't keep working like this. It's not good for your health. Besides, you look like you're about to fall asleep. Come on, wrap it up already. There's time to do this later when you are well rested," she waved her hands as the papers returned back to the file.

"Queen Prussia expects the report in 4 days! Well...3 and a half now but that's not the point! ...HEY! GIVE IT BACK!" I tried to grab the file but INTERPOL snatched it away.

"I think the Queen would prefer you give her a coherent report rather than a late one. You know she's a little more understanding compared to the other rulers," she snapped her fingers as the file disappeared from her hands. A thud could be heard as the file reappeared in one of the filing cabinets. I groaned, almost ready to pull out my hair. "INTERPOL please–"

"Absolutely not. Bed now!" she swiftly cut me off, eyes glowing, "If not, I'll forcefully put you to sleep. And trust me, I'll make sure you'll wake up with a really shitty headache."

My lips twitched as I slowly stood up. Rolling back my shoulders, I felt a wave of tiredness crash over me. "Move, I'm sleeping here," I muttered gruffly as I tried to push her away. She grabbed me by the shoulders and stared into my eyes. "No, god forbid you sleep on that couch again. You are going to get proper rest for once. In *your* bed, in *your* own room," she told me firmly. I sighed loudly but allowed her to drag me away.

When we reached the Staff Quarters, she finally released me. "Good night UN," she simply said before walking away. I nodded, a little miffed at her behaviour. As soon as she left, I trudged to my room. It looked like no one lived there which in a way wasn't entirely

wrong. I hardly came to my room–outside of grabbing some new clothes–preferring to be in my office. After a quick wash up and change of clothes, I got into bed, pulling the covers over my body. *Click!* The lights went off and the room was bathed in the moon's cold glow. Slowly, my eyelids fluttered shut as I fell into a peaceful slumber. However, memories of my childhood soon reappeared in my mind's eye.

*

I sat under the oak tree, sweat sliding down my neck as I kept my eyes shut. My heart thumped in my chest as my breathing slowly evened out. "Goddamnit, League really thinks my energy is free flowing. I'm beat," I muttered, trying to ignore the headache forming at the back of my head.

"UN!" WHO tackled me from the side, causing us to tumble to the grassy ground. She cackled as I pushed her off, scowling. "WHO! How many times have I told you not to tackle me! You know how dangerous that is!" I scolded her. In response, she simply stuck out her tongue and plugged her ears using her fingers. I sighed, shaking my head as I helped her up.

"What do you want anyways?" I asked, noticing her bun coming undone, "Come here. You're bun's coming loose. I'll re-tie it." She clapped her hands in delight as she took a seat on the grass. I groaned internally but kneeled down. As I combed through her hair with my hands, she explained why she had come. "I wanted to talk to you! We hardly see each other these days. What are you so busy with anyways? Surely studying can't take up your whole day!" she complained, kicking her legs childishly. I warned her not to do that again else her bun would come out wonky. She huffed but stopped and sat still.

"League increased my training hours," I explained, as I slid in the pin which held up her hair before patting her shoulder to notify her that I was done. She thanked me before frowning. "But why? You're not going to go about using your ability anyways," she told me. My right eye twitched at the reminder of my "extremely powerful yet useless" ability–as League had dubbed it–otherwise known as Plunge. It was an extremely rare ability that allowed me to steal others' ability for my own use. Once I took it from them, they'd never get it back. I learnt that the hard way when I accidentally gained another person's ability once I

manifested. (It wasn't even useful! It was just the ability to move small objects mentally.)

"Yea, and that's why he's forcing me to learn how to fight. Honestly, years of living on the streets has given me more experience on how to fight. I don't need more lessons!" I complained, crossing my arms together. WHO gave me a small understanding smile as she shrugged. "Well, it's not like there's much that we can do to be honest," she told me. A grim smile crossed my lips as I leaned against the tree. "Damn that bastard," I let out a harsh laugh even as worry clouded my sister's gentle features.

"Don't be like that UN," she told me. I shot her glare but softened when I noticed her leaning away from me. "Sorry WHO, I'm just really tired," I apologised, wrapping my arms around her. She hugged me back and we were like this for a few moments when suddenly, the sound of glass shattering resounded throughout the courtyard.

We looked up only to see a bloodied France and Britain fighting on the 2nd level of the school. The stained glass window had shattered allowing us to see them in full view. " ***Va te faire foutre!*** *" France screeched as she and Britain tussled with one another. WHO's eyes widened as she hurriedly stood up. "I'll get Dad. Stay here!" she instructed me before rushing off. I watched her leave as my gaze drifted back to the two fighters. I watched them with mild interest but began to doze off. Before I knew it, I had fallen asleep.*

*

Sunlight poured into my room as I blinked drowsily. Lazily turning my head to look at the clock, I was slightly surprised to see that it was only 7.30am. School had yet to start but my staff were surely up and about by now. Swinging my legs off my bed, I stretched, letting out a huge yawn. Doing a few light stretches as I made my way to the toilet, I recalled my dream.

League had always been much harsher towards me compared to my sister and it only served as fuel for my disdain. I had found myself wondering multiple times if he had adopted me only because WHO and I were almost inseparable (prior to our adoption) or was it because he felt bad for me as well. When I became principal, I

began to wonder if he took me in so that I'd be his protege. WHO often told me that League loved the two of us, he was just really bad showing it but I could never really bring myself to believe that. Would a father who loved me subject me to thousands of hours of training? Would a father who loved me just vanish and leave me to run a school?

From my time on the streets, I highly doubted that was how a father would act. Sure most were gruff and slightly mean towards their son (and maybe their daughter) but I don't think they ever could compare to League's behaviour. Then again, what did I know? I was anything but a father.

Maybe that was a good thing because when I became principal, I swore to treat these students like how a father would treat his children. At least in my eyes that being said. I guess the efforts paid off because my current students were growing into fine people. Well, maybe not all. America, Russia and China were a pain to deal with but at least China tried to keep his antagonising remarks to a minimum. The other two however...

Knock knock knock! I buttoned up the last button of my shirt as I hurried over to open the door. It was ASEAN and he looked extremely distressed. "What happened?" I asked, frowning. He whispered something to me and my eyes widened.

"Call a meeting with the team now! Classes can wait, this is far more important," I told him, urgency in my voice. ASEAN nodded before he rushed off to inform the others. I sighed, rubbing my temples as I grabbed my tie before heading to my office. *What am I going to do?*

Translations:

***Va te faire foutre!*--F*ck you/Kiss my ass (idk, Google translate is wild)**

Notes:
The poem "In dark and ancient lands it abides, Chaos in its heart forever pries..." is not mine and I took it from character.ai because my poetry is horrible.

Edit: 30 May 2024-- I changed the last bit of the chapter because there were a few mistakes in it and it would have been really difficult to write the next chapter.

A/N: Ah, the plot thickens. I mentioned this in the 1K Q&A that UN actually has another ability so here's your answer to that Person_Meh . If anyone watched Charlotte the anime, then you'd get the so-called reference (If I can even call it a reference because I kinda just used the damn name) of UN's ability's name.

For this chapter I wanted to focus a bit more on UN's backstory, personality and a bit of the threat. I intend to make a second chapter after this to continue the story so stay tuned for that one! (P.s, I promise the next chapter has more about the threat. I swear.) UN and WHO btw are 16 and 13 in this backstory. UN is currently around...his early 40s, inheriting the academy from LoN when he was 22.

But yea, from the backstory, y'all can see that UN and LoN (league of nations) don't have the best relationship. UN has LoN's ability (which is nullification) because League deliberately passed the ability on to UN before his vanishing. (When I say vanishing I really mean League just died in typical CH breaking apart fashion. More on that one day.)

I'd also like to make a side note that LoN actually did love UN but UN never really saw LoN's love for him. Very honestly, UN is shit at discerning emotions. WHO is better at this and that's why she's an amazing nurse! XD

Also, *le gasp*, France and Britain didn't have a good relationship during their time at the academy?! I'll explain this really quickly since I intend to possibly bring it up in future chapters but basically when the French and British Empire were ruling, they absolutely hated each other and so in turn their children also hated each other. So when they met in the academy, they were basically like Ame and Russ--fighting all day long. It was only when they were in their 2nd last year then did they start mellowing out.

Also, because I'm kinda bored, here's a list of some of the countries that attended Pangea Preparatory Academy during LoN's reign. LoN was principal for about...15-ish years (10 years being an actual principal and another 5 being a principal while hell was raging in Pangea because of who? His students!)

In no particular order:
+ F.E
+T.R (changed his name from Weimar Republic)
+J.E
+ Britain
+ France
+ USSR
+ Austria
+ Hungary
+ Qing (Dynasty)

+ Egypt
+ NATO
+ NASA
+ AU (that's how she and Egypt are great friends)
+ Switzerland
+ The Grand Duchy of Finland

And that's pretty much it! Hehe, now's time to move onto the questions!

QUESTION TIME!!!

1) Which character from this book would you like me to draw?

2) What do you think of INTERPOL and UN's relationship?

And before I leave, have some art that I did. The one below is a part of this "series" that I intend to do. I'm in the midst of creating a Spotify playlist right now. Hahaha, if you want, you can go and see if you can find it. It's cover is the same as this book.

[image]

(I swear the more I try to write/draw my signiture, the worse it becomes)

Another piece of art. I actually posted the half done version in my artbook so you can check that out if you want.

[image]

Surprises for another book? Hahaha, maybe. I haven't really decided on my next book after Behind his Innocence (book in the works. Will be released after BbD) although I am thinking about making a zombie apoclypse (i have no clue how to spell that) AU (kinda also inspired by Montegrande Lee's (youtuber) AU that she recently came up with) whereby the ASEAN family is struggling to survive. Would y'all be interested in it if I make a book about it?

Ha, even after Behind his Innocence is done, I might do a sequel (if I think it makes sense). I already have the damn rough plot out in my planning docs. Help. I have too many ideas lmao.

Okay byeeee :D

Incorrect quotes and alignment charts about BbD characters

I interrupt my usual writing to bring to you some dumb things I made up because writing the next chapter is a pain in my ass. ;-; Please take this nonsense as compensation. I'll come back with a real chapter after my break.

Bound by Destiny Incorrect Quotes:

ASEAN and Family responds to "we have a problem" caused by MalPhilIndo:

ASEAN/Singapore: And it's another Tuesday, what's your point?

Vietnam: Would shooting you solve the problem? No? Then get out.

Thailand: Let me guess, you caused it?

Brunei and Timor Leste: If you mean the flaming pillar outside, that was the solution to last week's problems.

Cambodia and Laos: You call it a problem, we call it a solution.

Myanmar: No, YOU, have a problem. I'm the *idiot* who keeps getting into one!

Singapore/ASEAN: Gimme a sec, I'm not drunk enough to listen to this yet.

NK, Russia and China:

Russia: That son of a bitch America!

China: Language Russ.

Russia: Apologies. That son of a bitch

covers NK ears

Russia: AMERICA!

NK: Bruh. -_-

China: *facepalms*

Germany and Poland:

Poland: Hey wanna hear a joke?

Germany: Not really...

Poland: Come on, pleasssssse?

Germany: *sighs* Okay.

Poland: Knock knock!

Germany: Come in!

Poland:

Poland: I hate you

America and Canada:

Canada: Did you eat all those donuts?

America: *mouth full of food* No?

Canada: *pointing at Ame's pant's leg* Then what is that?

America: Cocaine

INTERPOL and UN:

INTERPOL : UN? It's 4am, why are you baking a cake? And what's with the party decor and sweets?

UN: I'm celebrating the death of my sleep schedule and sanity. Want a cookie?

INTERPOL :

INTERPOL : *takes a cookie* Why not?

Singapore, Germany and Poland:

Germany: I want to be a caterpillar.

Poland: Explain.

Germany: Eat a lot, sleep for a while. Wake up beautiful.

Singapore: *from his room* You know they have a lifespan of, like, 2 weeks right?

Germany: Even better.

Singapore:

Poland:

Both: GERMANY NO-

Canada and America:

Canada: Oh fiddlesticks! That really ruffles my feathers!

America: OH FOR THE LOVE OF BRITAIN! JUST SAY F*CK!

ASEAN and Thailand:

Thailand: So Dad, what did you have for dinner?

ASEAN: Errr....er a salad. A fruit salad.

ASEAN: It er...was mostly er...grapes.

ASEAN: Fermented grapes.

Thailand:

ASEAN: It was wine.

Thailand:

ASEAN: I had wine for dinner–

WHO, UN and INTERPOL :

UN: *wakes up from his 10th coma* *yawning* Hey guys, what time is it?

INTERPOL : It's about 2am, are you hungry?

UN: I'm up for some food.

WHO: *sobbing* CAN BOTH OF YOU STOP ACTING LIKE NOTHING HAPPENED?!

Malaysia and Philippines:

Malaysia: *is putting "sugar" into his coffee*

Philippines: Uh...Mal...

Malaysia: What.

Philippines: That's salt you're putting into your coffee.

Malaysia:

Malaysia: *realises what he's done*...Ah I guess I have no soul.

Philippines: That's really bad for you though...

Malaysia: *chugs boiling hot salted coffee*

China and NK:

China and NK are making muffins (idk why but let's roll with it).

NK: *struggling to reach the top shelf (cus NK is short af)*

China: *setting down spoon* Do you need me to get it for you?

NK: *gasps* HOW DARE YOU INSULT THE VERTICALLY CHALLENGED?!

China: *chuckles* Okay then.

NK: *1 minute later, defeated sighing* Help meeeeee

Germany and Singapore:
Germany: I've slept so little that I can officially smell colours.

Singapore: How are you still alive?

Germany: That's the question I've been asking every day!

How they act when drunk Bound by Destiny characters (18 and above):

Germany: *literally starts bawling* / *stones away*

Poland: *forgets he can't fly and tries to aka reckless* / *Gets weirdly cuddly with people*

America: *Set himself on fire. "It's toasty*

Russia: *starts singing Russian songs/lullabies*/ *cries when he remembers his childhood*

Canada: *acts like America but 5x worse*

China: *becomes very loud and annoying* (claims he isn't drunk)

Thailand: *basking in the warmth of the alcohol*

Vietnam: *will find all her enemies and talk with them*

Laos: *stoning away*

Cambodia: *Alcohol does nothing to depress her system. It actually makes her high ;-;*

Myanmar: *bawls*

Indonesia: I can't even drink wtf are you talking about

Philippines: *Screams bloody murder at everyone*

Finland: *starts to act very social*

Japan: *becomes very quiet and emotional*

[image]

[image]

Someone get Ger some therapy. Also, this is Singa's official design for the Bound by Destiny AU. Maybe I'll change it some day.

_____

Alignment chart for BbD characters:

Bound by Destiny Characters in a zombie apocalypse:

Dies immediately→ Italy

Completely unbothered→ South Korea, Japan and Russia

Tries to find supplies→ Germany, Canada and Ukraine

Parental figure→ Singapore, Canada and China

Tries to kill the zombies→ America, China, Russia and Poland

Screams/cries → North Korea, Italy, Germany

Tries to find a hiding spot→ Poland, Canada, Russia, Germany, Ukraine and Japan

Therapy:

First in line→

The therapist taking notes at lightning speed→ Poland, South Korea, North Korea and Ukraine

"But I'm okay!" after talking for 3 hours→ Canada, America, Japan, Italy and Poland

Knows they have issues but refuses to go→ Germany, Poland, Singapore, America, North Korea and Russia

Therapy for what?!→ Germany, America, Russia, China and Italy

What their writing looks like:

Incredibly neat and perfect→ Canada, Germany, Singapore, Ukraine, South Korea

Loopy and pretty cursive→ America, Poland, North Korea, Japan, Italy

Rushed by still legible→ America, Germany, Poland, Canada and Singapore

Completely ineligible, you need dental records to identify the words→ China, Russia, America, South Korea, North Korea, Japan and Ukraine

Whole cast of Bound by Destiny world I have introducing themselves:

Just says their name→ Finland, Germany, Russia, China, Ukraine and Myanmar

Gets nervous and begins to stutter→ Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Laos, Brunei and Canada

Says random information about themselves no one cares about→ Italy, America (if he feels like it), Indonesia, Philippines and South Korea

Doesn't know what to say→ North Korea

Tries to be nice and fun by making silly jokes→ America, Canada,

Japan, Cambodia and Italy

Isn't in the class: North Korea and Indonesia

No need to introduce themselves cause everyone knows them→ GERMANY, America, Russia, Indonesia, Philippines and Malaysia

Bound by Destiny characters As a babysitter: (not really canon tbh)

Actual parent→Russia, America

Sleeps the whole time→ Indonesia, Myanmar, Ukraine, Finland

Babysitter supreme™→Singapore, America, Russia, Malaysia (when he wants to be), SK

May as well have sold your kid to the devil→Canada, Russia, China, NK

Says they don't care but secretly keeps watch→China, Finland, Japan, Germany

The child→America, Poland, MalPhilIndo, NK

What their writing looks like but now it's the staff:

Incredibly neat and perfect→ INTERPOL, Red Crescent, NASA and ROSCOSMOS

Loopy and pretty cursive→ UN, EU, AU and Red Cross

Rushed by still legible→ WHO, UN and NATO

Completely ineligible, you need dental records to identify the words→ WHO, ASEAN and ROSCOSMOS

Doodle dump time! (Istg at this rate I'll just use the book here to dump all my art)

I'm too obsessed with Hamilton (music) ;-;. Too bad I can't go watch the show. But I can listen to the music! Have some hamilton x countryhuman fanart.

[image]

Maybe if I feel up to it I'll do a proper drawing one day. I think America(top) and Netherlands are the only ones that look good. France is Lafayette and Ireland is Hercules Mulligan.

Final art piece of the day: Sweden and Germany from my other Detective AU. I'm too lazy to outline or colour. Maybe I'll do it another time. (Gosh why am I so dead today)

[image]

I have no clue how it got twisted like this. But this photo has some clues for my next book haha.

ALSO! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE 4K y'all!!! I'll see you guys soon after my break is over but don't be shy to drop me questions about BbD (or other random stuff) throughout my break. (I'm almost chronically online which is very bad but I'm still doing it)
I'll see you guys soon :)

~Eli (why am I doing this ;-;)

Trouble is brewing (2)

[image]

By the time I entered my office, ASEAN, EU and NATO were already there. They all wore the same grim expression as they greeted me. "We'll wait for the others before we begin," I told them. They nodded and sat back down quietly. After a few minutes, INTERPOL, NASA , AU and ROSCOSMOS came in. Once I was sure that everyone was here, I motioned for INTERPOL to cast her sound-proofing spell. She gave me a nod once she was done.

"We have about 2 hours before the spell wears off," she informed us.

"Thank you INTERPOL and thank you everyone for coming today. I've called for a meeting today to discuss the threat. ASEAN, if you would explain please?" I motioned to him as he stood up.

"Okay, firstly, I refuse to continue saying, "the threat". It sounds ridiculous," ASEAN started off, earning a few chuckles from the room. I shot him a look (which he ignored) as he continued, "Furthermore, me and AU have given a name to call this...monstrosity. So from now, I will be addressing the threat as Apophis. With that aside, I'll begin my report," he cleared his throat a few times before continuing.

"As most would have known, the school has been actively tracking the growth of Apophis which for those who may have forgotten, was the monster that was once slayed by the Kingdom of Light after the Second Great War ended. Unfortunately, it was only Apophis' body that was killed. Its consciousness remained and it has been hiding out in the Kingdom of Darkness ever since. Recently, we detected a surge in Apophis' growth and power which strongly indicates that there is a possibility that Apophis may have its physical body back once again. As such, we need to discuss what to do next regarding this case."

There were murmurs throughout the room as EU raised a hand to ask, "How strong would its physical body be? Does AU or you have

any information on this aspect?" AU shared a knowing look with ASEAN and I felt my stomach sink. Judging by the twitching of AU's cheek, I knew that the news was probably not good. After a brief moment of silence, she replied, "We can't be 100% sure from the preliminary report however it highly suggests that Apophis' physical body may be as strong as it was previously or it may even be stronger."

Silence enveloped the room. No one knew what to say. Apophis was already extremely strong prior to its demise–a raging force that ravaged the land. The Kingdom of Light even lost a few soldiers to it during the fight against it and they took a whole month to finally kill it off. *If it is stronger than it was before*...I didn't want to think about how many more might die. "What do we do now? If we let Apophis continue to grow, we might have a recurrence of the war!" NASA fretted, eyes wide. Her half-brother, NATO, placed a comforting hand on her shoulder.

"We won't NASA. Right UN?" he looked at me. *Please tell me that it's true,* his gaze was fearful–something I rarely saw in his eyes. *He's really scared of the threat...so is everyone else*...I could see the fear and worry in everyone's eyes and noticed ROSCOSMOS biting his cheek (something he often did whenever nervous). I swallowed, nodding my head. "Right now, ASEAN and AU will continue to monitor the readings of Apophis' power and also give a more detailed report. For all we know, the surge could be due to people using their abilities near Apophis' location," I gave out another possibility. Everyone except AU nodded. Her gaze locked with mine as I discreetly shook my head. I was well aware that the chances of the readings being affected due to external factors (like people using their abilities) was very very low. *But there should be a glimmer of hope.* "EU and NATO, I want you two to prepare plans to protect the school and the students if Apophis comes to attack. ROSCOSMOS and NASA, you two will do research on Apophis with me. INTERPOL, you will continue running operations in the school. Make sure none of you raise any alarms to the students. We don't want to cause any panic or worry. Especially amongst the Year 7 and 8s."

Everyone nodded, agreeing to the plan. "And before I forget, have

you guys sent a letter to Queen Prussia about the surge yet?" I directed the question at ASEAN and AU. ASEAN gave a thumbs up as he added, "I sent it using the messenger eagle so we should get a response by tonight." I sighed in relief and thanked him.

"Alright, that's it for now if there's no other questions."

With that, our meeting ended. I told ROSCOSMOS and NASA to head to the library first while I grabbed some files. As I searched through the file cabinet, I felt a pair of eyes watching me. Looking at the reflection in the glass, I realised that it was AU.

"Why are you still here AU?" I asked her. *Ah there's that file,* I smiled to myself as I grabbed what I needed from the back of the shelf.

"Why did you give the others false hope?" AU's voice was soft but firm.
"What do you mean by false hope? I mean, I'm not wrong am I? The increased readings could be due–"

"Bullshit," she spat, venom lacing her voice.

"Excuse me?" I slowly turned around, raising an eyebrow as I stared at her, incredulous. It was rare that my staff would ever speak this crudely to me as they all held high respect for me. In fact, there was an unspoken rule that only INTERPOL was ever able to get away with swearing at me.

There was a flicker of fear in her eyes but it disappeared just as quickly as she continued, "You know damn well that those readings are accurate and only supposed to read *Apophis'* power. Not other sources. Besides, even if that was the case, it is impossible. Queen Prussia sealed Apophis' area. *No one* can get in there. So why the hell give false hope in the first place?" Her voice had increased in volume the more she spoke and I was glad that the sound-proofing spell was still in place. I didn't need INTERPOL or my other staff to come in and see what was going on.

"What did you want me to tell them?! That Apophis is going to rise again and that we are all screwed?! That thousands are going to die? That war might break out?" AU winced as my voice rose, "Is

that what you want me to tell them? IS IT?"

AU took a deep shuddering breath as she lowered her head. I pinched the bridge of my nose as I sighed internally. Softening my expression, I continued, "I'm sorry for the outburst but please, I beg you to understand where I'm coming from. The others are scared, AU. I'm sure you are as well. But we have a school to run and students to teach. If they worry too much, they are going to tip off the students and other staff. Can you imagine the whole school panicking?"

She didn't reply, stubbornly glaring at the ground. My shoulders slumped as I shook my head. Grabbing up the files from my desk, I walked towards the door. She trailed behind me and exited my office when I opened the door for us. Bowing stiffly, she raised her head to look at me. "Have a good day UN," she told me before turning on her heel to leave.

I closed my eyes, rubbing my temple with my free hand. *Am I in the wrong?* I couldn't be though...right? *I have my reasons for lying slightly. It's not even really much of a lie! I'm sure the team knows the possibility is impossible...I think. Well I hope they do.* As I walked towards the library, I tried to reassure myself that my actions were with good intentions. *Having my team worry isn't good anyways. Especially for poor ASEAN. He's under enough stress as it is between handling this, teaching and taking care of his children.* "I did the right thing," I murmured under my breath, "I did the right thing."

When I entered the library, I immediately headed to the restricted zone which was a hidden room in the back of the library. It used to be my father's secret office–one that he would use whenever he needed to escape the loud chatter and screams of his students. When I became a principal however, I didn't see the need for a second office (much less a secret one) and simply converted it to a library that held the restricted books from the different kingdoms alongside the older books that were no longer published. Only the librarian and those who were heads of their departments (ROSCOSMOS knew about the place since he was a part of my team) knew of the library's existence and were allowed to enter. I placed my hand on a small scanner cleverly on the wall. I felt a small prick on my index finger as the scanner glowed a light blue.

The wall in front of me parted to reveal a short hallway. I entered, the doors closing behind me.

The short hallway led me to the library. The room was long and tall. There were two floor to ceiling shelves on the two side walls with books lined up on them–a rolling ladder attached to each of them. There was also a big window that allowed the natural sunlight to stream in. Because we were up in the sky, all one could see were birds and clouds. Nonetheless, it was a beautiful sight. I could see NASA and ROSCOSMOS were hard at work. ROSCOSMOS sat on the ground, several books piled around him and several more opened in front of him. He had a notebook in his grasp and was scribbling away. NASA meanwhile was curled up on a long sofa reading through a thin leather bound book.

"How's it going?" I asked them as I set the files on the wooden desk at the end of the room. NASA looked up from her book, a frown on her face as she shook her head. "You would think that for a mega evil power there would be more stuff on it but any research on it is almost non-existent," she grumbled. ROSCOSMOS snorted in agreement as he continued to read through the books. "It's like people don't want anyone to know about evil monsters!" she ranted, changing to another book, "Oh look here's this big monster. Let's not record anything about it!"

"Most people didn't even know Apophis existed until the end of the last war," he replied calmly, "That's why there's so little on it."

I hummed in acknowledgement, snapping on a pair of black gloves for protection (both for the books' and my sake) As I looked through the shelves for some books, a flash of blue caught my eyes. *Huh, I guess we got a new book recently.* I grabbed a thick blue covered book that was slightly peeling at the edges, grunting slightly at its weight. It had gold lettering on the cover reading: *Monstra Pangaea, collectio plena. Volume 20. Interesting...* "What's that?" ROSCOSMOS asked as I brought it over to the desk.

"*Monstra Pangaea, collectio plena.* It's a new book which I assume someone ordered," I told him, opening up the book to the contents page. NASA looked up from her book as she replied casually, "Ah, so that's the book EU was complaining about." ROSCOSMOS and I

looked at her quizzically as she shrugged, "Something to do with slow delivery." I made an 'o' with my mouth, nodding although I was rolling my eyes internally. *Ha, typical of EU to complain about slow delivery.* I sat down, quickly reading through the contents page for the correct page to read. By the second page, I had already found what I wanted. *Primordial Monsters*.

Flipping through the pages with care, I soon found what I wanted. It was important for me to be careful with pages since they were flimsy–a typical thing for books from that period of time (the book was made at least 90 years ago) since it was a cost-effective solution back then. *Cheapskates,* I shook my head in disappointment as I began reading.

•

Primordial Monsters are the first monsters to roam the land of Pangea. Unlike typical monsters, they do not have physical bodies. Instead, they are more like spirits which are heavily intertwined with the nature of the land that they reside or come from. They are known for their immense abilities and are extremely powerful. This being said, not all Primordial Monsters are evil. Contrary to belief, many of the Primal Monsters are quite benign and have been rumoured to help people from time to time.

•

Oh really? Why couldn't Apophis be a helpful monster then? I sneered childishly at the book as I continued to read. The only sounds that could be heard were the click of a pen and the flipping of pages. Suddenly, ROSCOSMOS called my name, "Sir, I think I've found something. You might want to take a look." I asked him to pass me the book and he obliged. Scanning through the text, I let out a gasp. I re-read through it unsure if I was reading it correctly.

•

Creatures of the abyss, called Beasts of Chaos, are special in the sense that once they obtain a certain amount of power, they are virtually undefeatable. Nothing is able to harm these monsters when they are in that state. While this is a theory in the works,

evidence from the Empirical Records (XXX B.P.E—X A.A) strongly suggest that there was a monumental disaster during the Empire's period, with survivors telling tales of an almost undefeatable creature that destroyed huge swathes of the Empire during that time. Said to be created and born from the shadows, survivors claimed that it had no form and seemed to only grow larger with each passing day.

•

My hands shook as I re-read the passage, blood draining from my face. "Is...is...has this been verified further?" I asked ROSCOSMOS worriedly. He nodded, pointing to a few of the books opened on the ground. "A later edition of this book confirmed the theory as it had been seen with a few of the lesser monsters that had similar characteristics to these monsters of chaos. While the lesser monsters weren't undefeatable, they had an increased resistance to weapons and some could not be defeated by simple weapons–thus leading to the formation of the rare alloy, *aluminium–scandium*," he explained.

"Okay...how do we know when Apophis is going to reach that level?" NASA asked, surprisingly calm. I didn't reply, frantically flipping through the pages for an answer. ROSCOSMOS said something but I ignored him. In my mind, the same few sentences were repeated over and over. *What if Apophis is already at the level? What if war breaks out again? Would that mean I have failed?* My heart thumped wildly and the world felt like it was closing in on me.

"Sir, are you okay? You're very pale. Maybe you should take a seat," NASA looked at me, frowning. I opened and closed my mouth, unable to speak. My stomach churned and I felt like puking. NASA gently pushed me onto the chair and I slumped in it, burying my head in my hands. "This isn't good...this isn't good," I muttered, "It's really not good." I heard ROSCOSMOS snort followed by the sound of paper being flipped as he responded, "Comment of the year."

"ROSCOSMOS!" NASA chided him. I raised my head slightly to see her hitting him on the back of his head. He growled, glaring at her. She rolled her eyes as she returned her gaze back to me. Her expression softened when she patted my shoulder, "Surely it's not

that bad right UN? We don't have the answer to when Apophis will reach an undefeatable level but right now, surely it hasn't reached it yet. There's hope! And maybe those readings from today are also slightly off." I took a shuddering breath as I straightened myself.

NASA's right...things aren't that bad yet. I nodded reassuringly to myself, thanking her for her words. "You're right NASA. I shouldn't be so quick to panic. Okay...we need to research more, figure out when Apophis is going to reach the undefeatable level so that we can prevent it and hopefully find a way to prevent it from exiting the Kingdom of Darkness," I told them. Both nodded, as they returned back to their respective spots. I sighed, running a hand through my hair. *I can't believe I nearly lost control over there.* I sneered at myself internally, unhappy to have shown that moment of weakness. I didn't particularly like my staff seeing the vulnerable side of me as I felt that it would undermine my ability to lead them. No one liked to see their leader weak.

Remember UN, never show weakness. It will cause your downfall, League's words echoed in my mind. Taking a deep breath to steady my nerves I continued my reading. Hopefully there would be something that could help us.

A/N: I'm backkkkkkk guys :D How was the chapter? I hope it was good :) The stakes are much higher now and UN seems to not be coping well with his role. *UN panic intensifies*

School is starting back up again and it's going to be a busy term for me but I'll try my best to keep with my schedule. (although it is rather messy not gonna lie) oh yea during my trip (aka my break), I bought a new sketchbook! I'm super excited to start it once my old one is done. >:D

Anyways, next chapter will be back to one of our two main characters so stay tuned for that one! By the way, quick question but do you like this style of writing (as in shifting PoVs in 1st person)? I'm not sure if my next book should follow the same style or should I go with a closed 3rd PoV (as in I only follow one character around from that character's PoV) or go with an open 3rd PoV whereby it's basically everyone and

I'm kind of narrating. (I'm writing the first two chapters in that style but I'm not sure if I want to continue writing like that.) So what do you guys think?

And now for some real questions!

1) Who do you think is right? AU or UN. Is UN right by giving a white lie?

2) Would you like me to share my views on the CH shipping aspect? (might put it in the artbook)

3) What songs fit the characters of BbD? (eg. Japan, Italy, Canada, etc.) I'm creating a Spotify playlist for the book (you can find it actually but like it's in the works) and I would love to hear what are some of your suggestions!

Okay, byeeeeeeeeee! *melts into a puddle*

Art Class

[image]

"Today marks the start of our annual Arts Appreciation Week! This year..." I tuned out Mr UNESCO, my art teacher, as I laid my head onto the table. Most of my classmates were staring at the board with glazed over eyes. At my table, America was mindlessly doodling on his sketchpad and Japan was doing her maths homework. Canada was staring off into space, a small dreamy smile on his face. Germany was at the front of the class with Finland and a few others, writing something down. Italy who was with them was the only one I could see who was visibly paying attention.

"And that is the task for this year's Arts Appreciation Week!" UNESCO concluded cheerfully before his shoulders slumped and he sighed, "None of you were listening were you?" Silence. He threw his hands up into the air as he stalked back to his desk to grab a piece of chalk. Muttering unintelligible words, he scribbled on the board what we were supposed to do. *Finish up the drawing from the last class and hand it up before class ends.* Then, he headed back to his desk and plopped himself onto his seat, a sulky expression on his face.

"No one ever listens to me," he grumbled.

Everyone ignored him and immediately got to work. I flipped open my leather bound sketchbook as I took out my set of oil pastels. Grabbing the colours I needed, I started to block in the base colours.

The art room filled with soft chatter and banter.

"What's your drawing about?" Canada asked me, colouring his own drawing in with colour pencils. I shyly showed him my drawing which was of my father, both of his wings still intact. I had worked very hard on the wings, wanting to give them justice. Each individual feather was drawn to perfection, each of them unique. "It's not very good," I muttered, a small blush on my face. I could draw well enough but it wasn't anywhere near Italy's level. Canada smiled warmly as he replied, "It's really cool Poland. The wings, especially, are amazing."

I thanked him before asking him what his drawing was about. He picked up his sketchbook and showed it to me. It was a small cabin in the woods. "It's a winter cabin Ame and I used to go to when we were younger," he explained, grinning. "Huh, I didn't know your family owned a cabin in the woods. I thought you guys just stayed in the palace all the time," I commented. Canada shook his head as he explained it was a secret cabin that only his family knew about. "We used to go there often with our mom and spend time together. I think now she does it with Aussie and Zea on and off," he explained.

"That's nice."

"It is. It's the only time we don't need to wear the stiff royal clothing when we're in the kingdom. Ame appreciates it a lot," his lips curled upwards as he looked at his brother. America lifted his head, giving us a confused look. "Huh? What are you talking about?" he asked. Japan also looked up, raising an eyebrow. Canada quickly explained that we were talking about our drawings and the cabin. A small smile appeared on America's face as he nodded.

"Ah, the days when I could be carefree," he closed his eyes, a dreamy smile on his face.

"You nearly burned the place down before though," Canada sniggered as his brother reached over the table to smack him. "It was just one time! And it was an accident!" America pouted as we laughed. We continued to chat some more as we worked. Before I knew it, class had ended. UNESCO made us pass up our sketchbooks before releasing us for the day.

"Remember to work on the project with your roommates!" UNESCO reminded us as he gave out the project brief to us.
I took one of the briefs and stuffed it into my bag before walking out of the classroom with the others. "Hey, do you see Germany? I need to ask him about something," Japan asked us. We shook our heads and I began to search for him. After a few sweeps of the hallway, I spotted Germany's mop of dark hair amongst the students and quickly made my way over to him with Japan and the American brothers in tow. He was talking with Italy, an unamused look on his face. (Or more accurately, Italy was yapping away to him.) As we walked nearer, I realised that Italy was talking about his art piece.

"Germany!" Japan called out, a smile on her face. He turned his head to look at her, a slightly surprised expression on his face. "*Hallo* Japan, Poland," he dipped his head slightly in acknowledgement. Italy grinned and waved. "Hah, you're lucky these two came to save you," he joked, nudging Germany. Germany growled, shooting a glare at the Italian, "*Halt die Klappe, Italien*." Italy clutched his chest in mock horror as he shot a puppy look at us.

"Can you believe this guy? He's asking me to shut up when I'm letting him hear my artistic ideas!" he whined. Japan rolled her eyes, slapping him on the back, "Not everyone wants to hear you rambling Italy." Italy gasped as he looked at her in horror. I tried to hide my smile behind my fist but he had already seen it. By now America and Canada had made their way over to us. America placed a hand on Italy's shoulder as he shot a smirk at Germany.

"I don't know how Germany does it but you can talk until our ears bleed when it comes to art," he chuckled.

"As if you don't yabber on and on when it comes to other things," Italy replied, deadpanned. Canada choked on his saliva as his eyes widened. Germany's lips twitched as he coughed lightly to gather back our attention. "Anyways, why did you come to find me, Japan?" he asked, pointedly ignoring Italy and America's squabbling (which was rather interesting to be honest). She whispered something to him and I saw him nod slightly although I noticed that he was frowning a little as well.

"Give it some thought okay?" she told him, patting him on the arm.

"Er...yea, okay," he replied rather awkwardly, scratching the back of his neck.

"Alright, I'll get out of your hair so I'll be going now. Come on guys," she turned around to face us as she grabbed Italy and America by the arms. For a petite girl, she was quite strong, easily dragging them away. "Are you coming with us, Poland? We're probably gonna play football before dinner," Canada asked me before shooting a look at Germany, "Do you want to join us Germany?" I turned around to look at the German who looked a little stunned when he heard the question. "Ah, no thanks...I'm not that good at it," he replied after a moment. Canada nodded as he looked back at me. I shook my head, telling him I was a little tired.

"Ah I see, well then, I guess we'll meet you for dinner later at 7.30?" he asked me. I agreed and we high-fived before he went to catch up with the others. Turning around, I was surprised to see Germany waiting for me. "Are you going back to the dorm now?" he asked me.

"Yep!"

"Ah, then we can walk back together."

I agreed although I was slightly curious as to why Germany wanted to walk back with me. Yes our relationship had improved in recent months since he had helped me but he still seemed to like keeping to himself. We walked in silence for a while before I spoke, "What did Japan ask you?" He looked at me before looking away. "You don't have to answer if you don't want to of course! I was just curious, that's all," I hurriedly added.

"Ah...er...I...I prefer not to talk about it."

I nodded in understanding although I was slightly disappointed. *I guess it's something very private.* Wanting to change the topic, I decided to ask him about his day. He shrugged and mumbled, "Mmm average I suppose. At least Russia wasn't irritating me so I guess that's the highlight." I laughed softly and nodded in

agreement.

"How about you?" he asked after a moment.

"Pretty good as well. Oh wait! Did I tell you..." I began talking animatedly and Germany nodded on and off. Occasionally he would say something but other than that I was the only one speaking. By the time we reached our dorm room, I was done. Smiling in embarrassment, I scratched my neck, realising that I had been rambling like an old man.

"Haha, sorry for talking so much."

Germany shook his head and told me it was fine. "I...I don't mind listening," he told me quietly. I grinned and teased, "So you won't regret it when I'm like Italy will you?" He shook his head, a soft smile on his face. "I like listening to your stories," he told me, "They're better than Italy's art rambles."

"Awww thanks. Heh, when I meet Italy I'm gonna tell him what you said."

He nodded and I was about to enter my room when suddenly, he asked, "Erm...Poland?"

I spun around, eyebrows raised. Germany shifted from foot to foot before replying, "Erm...do you have a colour that you like?"

I gave him a questioning look and his face turned red. "I like amber," I replied after a moment. Germany nodded silently before he thanked me. "I...erm...good night Poland!" he squeaked before slamming his door shut. *What just happened?* I stared at his door, eyes wide. After a moment I shrugged my shoulders. *Eh, he's probably just being awkward as usual.* Heading back into my room, I threw my bag onto my chair as I loosened my tie and unbuttoned the first few buttons of my shirt. Tossing the jacket onto the chair as well, I flopped onto bed, shutting my eyes. *A nap couldn't harm me right?* I yawned lazily. *I'll just sleep for 10 minutes...*

Translations:

Halt die Klappe, Italien--Shut up, Italy

A/N: Ooooh, is that roman--

ONCE AGAIN THERE IS NO ROMANCE INVOLVED IN THIS STORYLINE! I REPEAT! ONLY BRITAIN x FRANCE BUT THAT'S LIKE LIMITED SO UHHHHHHHHHHH-

***cough* Anyways, poor UNESCO! No one listens to him at all.**

Did you know? Many of these teachers in the school that don't appear in the story are actually UN agencies? (did I just come up with this? I'm not telling lol.) Of course there are some humans but most are agencies and stuff under the different departments. For example, the International Monetary Fund is under ASEAN's math department and she also teaches Econs and POA (Principals of Accounting). She also doubles as the school accountant. UN is getting his money's worth with her hahaha.

Also, for those who are wondering, this chapter takes place a day after UN's PoV last chapter. I realised I never made an actual timeline for the story--mainly cause I didn't want to deal with like years and shit like that but...now I think I should tell you which month it is in the story cause it has to do with Poland and his birthday.

***ahem ahem* Originally I was going to use the school system I'm familiar with which is basically school all year round with two semester breaks (Eg. Sem 1 --> Mid year break --> Sem 2 --> End of year break) but likeeeeeeee it wouldn't have worked so I decided to follow the American school system whereby school starts in late August/early September. So currently, they are in late October :D And for those who want to see the school year plan (kind of), here it is:**

There are 3 main breaks that students get. 2 of which allow them to

head back home.

— Winter break: 3 weeks holiday (aka Mid of sch year break)

— Summer break: 2 months holiday (End of year break)

—Exam season: 1½ week holiday (students are given a break for teachers to mark papers)

Currently, Ame and Canada no longer use the winter cabin because their father (Britain) requires them to attend to royal duties whenever they come back home. Also, New Zealand (the older brother--I based it off the actual independence dates Google gave) is 11 years old while Australia (the youngest brother [yes they are all male -_- I swear Aussie is a girl in the next book okay???]) is 9 years old. They love to prank Canada (the eldest--although Ame and him are twins) a lot with America whenever the twins are home.

Aight enough rambling, here's some questions!

1) Why do you think Germany wants to walk back to the dorms with Poland?

2) Artists, do you colour with colour pencils, pens, pencils or markers? Personally I've been getting into using markers a lot more these days (alcohol markers) cus I can colour faster but the bleed-through is killing me haha.

Also, have some doodles of Bound by Destiny characters!

[image]

Everytime I have to draw Poland, he always comes out the weirdest. Is this a sign or something?/j Personally I only like Japan's drawing cus she looks the most chibi/normal looking. Sorry my boys >:(

And this:

[image]

Oh one last thing before I go: Some crazy stuff I text to my friends :)

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

Yea...I'm totally sane guys. Totally sane. Yep totally 100% sane. :D

Okay, bye guys!

Realisations

[image]

*WHAT THE F**K DID I JUST DO?!* I stared at my hands in horror as I slid down onto the ground. My heart was hammering like crazy and I felt like I was about to pass out. *Damn, you really are socially awkward aren't you?* East's voice reverberated in my head, *You can't even ask Poland a simple question without becoming a mess*. I groaned, half wondering if I should smash my head into the wall. *Oh quit it East, he's trying,* West chided him. The two began their squabbling and I felt my head throb.

"Please shut up," I muttered, cradling my head in my arms. They didn't listen–if anything, the voices got louder and louder, worsening my headache. I rocked back and forth, silently groaning in pain. *Is it really that hard for you two to not fight?*

"Yes," both of them replied in unison. I sighed, rubbing my temples as I laid my head on the cool ground. It soothed my headache but the voices were still arguing. Fortunately, after a while, the voices quietened and the throbbing lessened. I sighed in relief as I took off my jacket and tie and hung them on the chair.

What was I thinking? 'Do you have a colour you like?' What am I? 6? My face burned at the memory and I ran a hand through my hair. I wanted to curl up and die. Despite my social awkwardness, I was very sure friends didn't act like this. *That is if he considers you a friend...* I decided to ignore that thought and busied myself with unpacking my schoolbag hoping to take my mind off my embarrassment. As I packed, I found my mind drifting back to Japan's question.

"Anyways, why did you come to find me, Japan?" I asked her. Her eyes brightened as she leaned in to whisper. "Poland's birthday is coming soon and we're gonna plan a surprise birthday party for him! You're invited so get something for him okay?" I nodded but was frowning. "I...I'm not

sure if I want to though," I told her. Japan rolled her eyes as she patted me on the shoulder. "Think about it okay? At least get something for him?"

"I...er...okay," I replied hesitantly. She grinned and announced, "Alright I'll get out of your hair now. Come on guys!" she grabbed America and Italy who were arguing before dragging him away.

I groaned softly and rubbed my eyes as I leaned against my bed. *Well...if Poland likes amber, maybe I can make something with the amber stones our school has in the art room. I have a few ideas...* My lips curled upwards softly as I remembered our conversation earlier. He was so excited telling me about the shenanigans that America and the others got up to. You could really see the spark in his eyes when he spoke. It was rather endearing and I found my lips tugging upwards. *He's a little bit like the dog that used to hang within the palace courtyards when I was 8. Energetic and tiny.*

*

I was walking in the courtyard alone after my lessons had ended for the day. I didn't particularly fancy going back into my room and holing up there. And it was spring so I thought I'd go out and admire the spring sky.

BARK! BARK!

My ears perked up hearing a faint barking sound. Curious, I decided to find out where it was coming from. As I walked nearer, I realised that I was heading towards the unused well. Ever since my father had died, Oma had made some upgrades to the palace so now there was tap water coming straight to the faucets! It was all rather interesting. She also introduced this to some of the public toilets in the capital and it was all the rave. Some of the more well to do families were even installing it in their houses according to the news.

Peering into the well, I found a small puppy. It was stuck at the bottom of it, jumping upwards to escape but to no avail. Its golden fur was matted with dirt and it was barking furiously. ***Help me!*** *It seemed to be saying. 'How did it get in there?' I looked around, wondering if it possibly belonged to someone. Staring back into the well, I realised that*

the puppy had given up, staring up at me with forlorn eyes. 'I have to do something,' I thought, 'But how?'

In the end I decided to try and use the wooden bucket and coax the puppy in. However, each time I tried to coax it into the bucket, it would whimper and duck away. After a long time, my patience began to thin. It was then Berlin came. I told him what was going on and whined, "Why won't it go in? I'm trying so hard but the stupid mutt isn't trying to help itself!" He chuckled softly as he explained that I had to be patient. "I have been! Am I doing something wrong?!" I asked. Berlin shook his head gently as he told me to wait.

"Where are you going?" I asked him, chucking the bucket onto the ground. I followed him and was surprised to see him leading us to the back entry of the kitchen. I had never been there before, Oma said that it wasn't fit for a young child. "The last thing I need is for my grandson to be burnt by the furnace there," she muttered while signing some papers.

"Stay here Prince Germany. I'll be back in a minute," Berlin informed me before going in. Me being a rather curious child didn't listen and followed him.

Bang! Bang! Sizzle sizzle!

The sounds surrounded me and so did the aroma of food. It was rather hot and I fanned myself with my small hands. 'This must be the main kitchen where the food is prepared for the kitchen staff and the guests,' I marvelled at the workers toiling away in the heat. As a child, I didn't understand how they could work in such conditions. Wasn't it uncomfortable? The royal kitchen was above the main kitchen and was much cooler, smaller and quieter. There were just a few staff working there and they served me and Oma our meals. A few of the staff raised their eyebrows when they saw me but shrugged. Berlin was talking with an older man. " ***Bavaria, hast du Fleisch übrig, das ich mitnehmen kann?*** *" he asked.*

" ***Wofür brauchst du es?*** *" Bavaria asked, crossing his arms.*

" ***Im Brunnen ist ein Hund und Prinz Deutschland will ihn retten.*** *"*

Bavaria's noticeably softened although he quickly coughed to cover it up and nodded. " ***Ich werde etwas besorgen ,****" he said before turning towards the pantry. Berlin sighed and began to look around the kitchen. When he spotted me, his eyes widened so much that I thought they would pop out. "Prince Germany! What are you doing here? I said to wait outside!" he walked over, running a hand through his hair, "Queen Prussia is going to kill me for this." He said the last bit through gritted teeth. My eyes widened as I grabbed his hand, "Really?" My eyes were wide with fear and I felt my body shake. Berlin's exasperated expression softened as he bent down to my height.*

"Of course not Prince Germany. What I said was exaggerated but I will get in trouble the longer you stay here. Go out now okay? I'll be with you in a minute or so," he gently pushed me towards the exit just as Bavaria came back holding a strip of meat. " ***Bitte schön ,****" he handed the meat to Berlin who took it, mouthing 'thanks'. When he saw me, his eyes widened as he quickly bowed. "I...I didn't see you there Prince Germany! What brings you here?" he asked nervously. I pointed to Berlin, grinning.*

"I followed him! But don't tell my Oma okay? Otherwise he'll be in trouble," I told him earnestly. Berlin choked back a laugh as he ushered me away. "Alright Prince Germany, come on now. Thanks Bavaria!" he used one hand to hold onto me as I was led out of the kitchen.

We headed back to the well where the puppy was. "The meat in the bucket should lure the puppy into the bucket and we can pull it up," Berlin told me as he lowered the bucket into the well. There was a bark and the next thing I knew, the puppy had jumped into the bucket. Berlin immediately started to pull the rope, bringing the bucket up. I grabbed the bucket once it was within reach and gently reached into it to grab the puppy. It leapt into my arms, barking happily. Berlin chuckled at my startled reaction as he set the bucket aside. I petted the puppy which was snuggling with me, a small thrilled smile on my face. However, that faded when I realised that the puppy's left hind leg was tainted red. "Berlin! The puppy needs a doctor now!" I told him. Berlin took one look and nodded. "Come on Prince Germany. We can go to the royal vet," he told me. I nodded and we rushed to the vet.

That puppy turned out to be a male Labrador Retriever which was only a year old. Oma wasn't a fan of me keeping it as a pet but

compromised, settling for Berlin keeping it. I loved playing with the dog, naming it Albert after a famous scientist that lived in my kingdom a long time ago. He had disappeared during the first war, labelled a traitor. There were rumours that he had gone to the Kingdom of Britannia, changing his identity and helping them. But those were just rumours of course.

Albert and I were good friends and when I first started going to Pangea Preparatory Academy, I dearly missed him. However, the good things in life never lasted and in my 2nd year in Pangea Preparatory Academy, poor Albert was involved in a carriage accident during the time that I was back in the kingdom. It killed him. I was devastated and for a month, I refused to talk to anyone. If I did speak, it was laced with bitterness and I would lash out at the servants and even Berlin. Eventually, I came to terms with Albert's death and apologised to everyone; however, the experience scarred me. Since then, I refused to keep a pet, not wanting to endure the same pain again.

Will the same thing happen with Poland? Is he going to leave me because he decides that he actually hates me? My smile faded as the realisation hit me. "Wow someone is really scared of losing their friend," East chuckled devilishly.

Me? Scared of losing a friend?

The thought felt so foreign that it took me a moment to process it. And when I finally did, I couldn't help but laugh. "You've finally lost it," East said, incredulous. I ignored him, basking in my new revelation.

Yes, I was scared. For the first time in a long while, I finally had some friends and I was afraid that I would lose them. The time I spent with Poland and Singapore over the course of the last 2 months had changed me in an unexplainable way. Somehow, I had gotten used to them. To having friends. And although I didn't say it out loud, I truly enjoyed their company. Our friendship was different compared to when me and Russia were friends. With Russia I was always reserved, scared to touch on topics that would trigger a fight with him. But with Poland and Singapore, I didn't have to be that scared. Perhaps that was what made talking to them

so much easier. That and the fact that both were generally easy-going.

Just a few months ago I was friendless. I guess Oma and Berlin were right afterall.

My stomach grumbled hungrily, snapping me out of my thoughts. Looking at the time, I realised that it was already 7.30. Ah, might as well go eat now. I exited my room, surprised to see Poland's room light on. *Did he forget to turn it off?* I knocked on the door and when I received no reply, gently opened the door. To my surprise, Poland was lying on his bed, snoring softly. I stared in surprise before mentally slapping myself. *Stop staring at him! It's creepy!* Shaking my head, I walked over to Poland and gently shook him awake. He stirred, eyes blinking sleepily.

"Germany?" he croaked out before shooting up, "Oh shit! What time is it?"

"It's 7.30pm."

Poland's eyes widened as he jumped off his bed, "Oh gods I'm late!" I held onto his shoulder, earning myself a slight glare. "Your hair is messy," I simply stated. He blinked at me but nodded. "I...I'll go comb it. Thanks Ger," he replied before slipping away to the bathroom.

Thanks Ger...I took a few minutes to process what the Polish had said. Something about it was off. And then it hit me. He had used a nickname! "Wow 10 points for guessing *Ger*," East commented snarkily, purposely using the new nickname. I ignored him as I began to survey Poland's room. A part of me knew it was weird (and wrong) but another part of me was curious. I had never really seen his room in the light before. That or I was too busy handling his nightmares to notice my surroundings.

On his bedside table, I noticed a broken frame with a picture inside. It was Poland and his father. Judging by the wings, I presumed that it was taken before the war. Poland had a grin on his face as he stood by his father proudly, his white wings out in their glory. It made my heart ache in a way that I couldn't explain. Shifting my

gaze to his study desk, I realised that there were several books strewn on the tables. *How messy...* My hands itched to rearrange the books but I stopped myself. It wasn't my room. I continued to observe his room, noticing that it was more decorated (and messy) than mine. I was about to take a closer look at something when Poland came out of the toilet.

"Oh you're still here?" he asked.

"Ah yea, do you want to walk together to the dining hall?"

Poland agreed before asking if I wanted to have dinner with them. I politely shook my head despite West screeching at me to say 'yes'. "You are such a frustrating young man!" she complained. *Shut up, I don't want to intrude on his personal relationships okay? Just because I'm friends with him, doesn't mean the others see me as friends.* That shut her up and I sighed in relief.

As we walked, I found myself getting curious about the frame in Poland's room. I was so absorbed in my thoughts, I didn't notice I nearly walked into the wall. Startled, Poland asked if I was okay. I nodded reassuringly. He narrowed his eyes and asked if I had something on my mind.

"Well...I was in your room earlier while you were washing up and I saw the frame with your dad. Is...is there a story behind the photo?" I asked, wincing slightly, afraid that I was touching on something sensitive. A warm look passed through Poland's eyes as they softened.

"Ah that one," he simply replied. I cocked my head, interest piqued.

"What you saw was the first and last photo we took before the war started. I must have been 2 years old then. I don't remember taking the photo but I do remember Papa giving it to me before I came here. It's my most treasured photo and ironically the only photo I have that keeps getting into danger. I broke the frame at the start of the year and it nearly sliced the photo in half. I haven't had time to fix it yet unfortunately," he smiled sheepishly. I nodded, the gears in my mind turning. *Maybe an amber frame would work.*

"How about you? Any photos with your parents or grandparent?" he asked.

"No. The...my father wasn't a fan of taking photos and unfortunately the only photo we took together got burnt after the war. As for my grandmother...well, she claims that photos are something that capture your soul. Although I think she just said that because she doesn't like photo-taking," Poland sniggered when he heard my last sentence but it faded away as his expression turned to pity.

"Well...as much as I hated that bas–sorry your father, I do feel bad that you don't have a photo of him anymore."

I shrugged, "You get used to it. And I don't like my father too much. He's the reason why I have to deal with this shit in school anyways." Poland broke into a relieved smile as he agreed. *Oh but only if you knew. If only you knew that I missed him.* I never told anyone for fear that I would receive backlash but growing up without my father was hard and I missed him from time to time. He wasn't a good man (and not a particularly amazing father either) but he was still my father at the end of the day.

The sound of chatter brought me out of my thoughts. We had reached the dining hall. "Are you sure you don't want to join us?" he asked me again, "It won't be awkward if that's what you are worrying about. I promise." I shook my head, politely declining, "Besides, Italy is probably going to torture me with his monologues." Poland 'oh-ed' as he nodded, "Yea...probably a bad idea to go over today huh? But you'll be fine eating alone?"

"Mmm yea, I'm used to it."

"Alright then. See you later!"

"See you," I watched him hurry over to his group of friends, feeling bitterness well within. *You made the choice Germany and you will stick with it,* I reminded myself. If that was the case, then why did I feel so lonely all of a sudden? It wasn't like it was my first time eating on my own. I was used to it...right?

Translations:

Bavaria, hast du Fleisch übrig, das ich mitnehmen kann?--Bavaria, do you have any meat left that I can take with me?

Wofür brauchst du es?--What do you need it for?

Im Brunnen ist ein Hund und Prinz Deutschland will ihn retten.--There is a dog in the well and Prince Germany wants to save it.

Ich werde etwas besorgen--I'll get something

Bitte schön-- Here you go

A/N: On today's menu with have a full course of angst and some fluff as sauce!

Haha in all seriousness, I was actually going to write a scene where Germany had a panic attack and Poland would have to calm him down but then scrapped the idea because I felt like I was heading into very stereotypical areas. But for my readers who are curious how the scene was going, here it is:

Really? Is that going to happen? Panic and fear gripped me as I shook my head lightly. "No...no...no. He wouldn't, right?" I panicked.

"Wow, someone's really scared of losing a friend aren't they?" East sneered, "For all you know he could be playing nice because you helped him."

Is it? Maybe...

"East please shut up for once. Poland isn't like that okay?" West butted in.

"And how would you know, West? You've been in the boy's brain? Have you seen the way he's treated Germany?"

"Yes I have seen Poland's treatment of Germany but I believe in Poland."

"Belief, belief, belief, that's what you're made of!"

"Oh yea? And you're made of pessimistic, cynical, good for nothing

thoughts!" West snarled back.

The two began to argue and I felt my gut twist and turn. My breath turned ragged as my heart hammered wildly. It hurt–it was like my heart was slamming against my bones. *Calm down Germany, calm down, calm down, deep– I CAN'T!*

"SHUT UP YOU TWO!" I screamed, dashing out of my room and into the toilet. Singapore had just returned and when he saw me, his eyes widened. "Germ–" I didn't hear the rest of his words, slamming the toilet door shut as I turned the tap water on.

Knock! Knock! "Germany? Are you okay? Germany?!" Singapore's frantic voice could be heard. I panted, scooping the water onto my face in an attempt to calm down. "What's going on? I heard someone say shut up," it was Poland. There was some hushed whispering but I didn't pay attention, continuing to wash my face furiously.

"EVERYONE IS GOING TO LEAVE HIM OKAY WEST?! IT'S BETTER TO PUSH THEM ASIDE RATHER THAN LET THEM GET CLOSE! GERMANY IS A CURSE TO OTHERS! THAT'S WHY HIS FATHER AND ALBERT ARE DEAD!" East yelled. That was the last straw, I fell to the ground, feeling the world swallow me up as everything faded into panic.

*

"Breath Germany. In...out...shhhhhh I'm here okay? Good, in...out...in...out..."

A soft voice cut through my panic like a light in the midst of darkness. "That's it, slow deep breaths, in and out...in and out," I tried to follow along as best as I could. *Slow breathes Germany...focus on breathing...you're okay...* Slowly, my panic began to subside and the darkness receded. Through blurry eyes, I found a familiar pair of green eyes staring back at me. *Poland.*

"Poland?" I mumbled as the world came back into focus. He smiled warmly, rubbing circles on my back. "How are you feeling?" he asked gently. I blinked, a wave of exhaustion rolling over me. My

heart was still racing. "Wow someone is really scared of losing their friend," East chuckled devilishly.

Me? Scared of losing a friend?

For the record, even I don't know how I managed to write this chapter till the point Germany had a panic attack. I was just writing and then went: Oh shit. I made this guy have smth akin to a panic attack. *(Disclaimer: I don't mean to joke about panic attacks.)* And then went on to talk to my friend about me keeping the scene. In the end both of us decided that the scene above had to go. SO NEW SCENE WAS BORN :D

Anyways, I think I need to cut down on my unhinged ramblings so let's dive right into the questions!

QUESTION TIME XD

1) Should I start a CH Headcanon book?

2) Who else relates to Germany's issues?

Alrighty! That's all from me for today. See you guys soon :D

Fall

[image]

The weekend rolled around and I finally had a break from my classes. I had initially planned to work on the extra supplementary work given out by Professor ASEAN; however Singapore had invited me to accompany him on his "babysitting duty". "It's basically me watching over my siblings run around and make sure they don't blow up the buildings by accident," he explained. I agreed; I mean it wasn't like I was intruding on his personal relationships right?

I hope not.

After changing into a pair of loose pants and a dark grey turtleneck, I grabbed the book I had been reading and stuffed it into my satchel before meeting Singapore at the dining hall. To my surprise (and slight discomfort), he was with his family. They waved to me, a smile on their face. "Isn't this the guy who hu–" a young boy was muffled by a girl with a headscarf as she chuckled weakly. The table fell silent as they stared at him. "Tim-tim wasn't thinking before he spoke isn't that right?" she gritted out the last bit. There was no reply and the tension felt so thick you could cut it with a knife. My heart thumped as I stuttered, "I...I...I can go."

Singapore grabbed my wrist as I was about to leave, rolling his eyes at his siblings. "Yes Timor, Germany hurt me but it was an accident. He's a good man. Understood?" he told the young boy who was trying to peel off the girl's hand from his mouth. "Yea Tim-tim," a boy with a flag similar to Singapore agreed. Ah, it was Indonesia– one third of the MalPhilIndo trio. Timor finally managed to get rid of the girl's hand, glaring at her before nodding. "Sorry *Abang* Germany," he bowed apologetically. I cracked a small smile as I told him it was fine.

"You still wanna eat with us?" Singapore whispered. "If it's fine with your siblings," I replied. He nodded, relief on his face. "Let's go get some food first," he told me before dashing off. I smiled and ran

after him. Maybe it wouldn't be so bad afterall.

*

After breakfast, Singapore and I followed the MalPhilIndo trio out to the courtyard. "Don't go too far guys. Make sure I can see where you are!" he ordered as he found a spot underneath a tree, "We can sit here if you're okay?" The last part was directed at me.

"Yea, that's fine," I replied, settling myself down underneath the tree. He sat next to me, leaning against the tree as he looked out, a tired expression on his face. All of sudden, he seemed much older than he was. "How old are your siblings Singapore? Besides Laos and Cambodia," I asked, watching the trio chase each other around the courtyard, narrowly missing the few students who scattered around the place. It earned them some looks of ire but the students eventually went back to whatever they were doing.

"Oh, Thailand and Vietnam are 20. Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar are 19. Malaysia is 17. Brunei is 14 and Timor is 12," he answered.

"Huh, Malaysia has a really good relationship with Philippines and Indonesia despite the age gap," I commented just as Indonesia narrowly missed colliding with a tree.

"WOI! BE CAREFUL INDO!" Singapore shot to his feet, eyes wide. His actions reminded me somewhat of a referee at a game. "Sorry!!!" Indonesia yelled back. Singapore rolled his eyes, sitting back down. "I swear Indo is a child in an adult's body," he muttered, "And I act like I'm a parent despite being 16." I chuckled as Philippines was tackled to the ground by Malaysia. They tussled around, rolling everywhere, their laughter ringing out. If I hadn't been looking, I would have assumed that I was with little kids and not near adults.

"Well, at least after this year I'll finally have a break since Indo and Phil will be gone and Mal...he'll be off to the Kingdom of Silk soon," I could hear the strain in Singapore's voice as he said that. "I'm gonna miss Mal so much," he muttered, eyes shining. I didn't know what to say and simply stayed silent.

"He and I used to be a lot closer...I mean we're still close of course...just not as much as we were when we were kids. He has Indo and Phil now and he's kind of busy with stuff. I mean it's fine and all. I just feel sad that I don't spend as much time with him and I'm not even sure if I'm going to follow Mal later on... Sorry, am I rambling?" Singapore stopped, letting out a laugh as he buried his head in his hands, "Sorry. Ugh, I keep doing that whenever I'm stressed. Sorry."

I hesitantly patted his shoulder as I murmured, "It's okay. I don't mind." He smiled gratefully at me, thanking me. I felt my stomach warm and a small smile flitted across my face. "It's not easy being the so-called "responsible" one to be honest. And it's really unfair. I lost more than half of my childhood to the damn war and I've been forced to grow up while my siblings can still act like kids," he complained, crossing his arms before sighing, "Well...I guess I did get the better end of the stick when I was captured by J...that man." I noticed his voice hitch when he talked about Japanese Empire (Japan's father). "Mal got it pretty rough and so did most of the others. Even Thai despite him being pretty compliant." he continued after a while, watching the trio who had finally gotten tired of running. They were trying to climb a tree but only Indonesia was successful. However, he soon fell, earning him another yell from the Singaporean.

"STOP CLIMBING THE TREE! YOU'LL GET INJURED!" Singapore screamed when Malaysia nearly fell on his head after another failed attempt at climbing. Singapore got up as he stalked towards his siblings, screaming angrily. I sat quietly, partially enjoying the show. It seemed like I wasn't the only one since the other students near to their group were also giggling away, whispering to each other.

"No more climbing, you hear me? If I catch you *one* more time, I swear...I swear I'm going to bring Papa over," he poked each of his siblings in the chest as he talked. They rolled their eyes, nodding before running off again. He came back, huffing as he leaned against the tree. "I swear those three are going to send me to an early grave," he gritted out, a complete 180 from his previously dejected demeanour. I sniggered as I looked up into the sky.

"At least Indonesia and Philippines will be adults next year, right? Maybe they'll finally be mature."

"I hope so," he groaned, "I don't think I can take being their babysitter for much longer. Neither can Viet or Thai."

I hummed in agreement as we lapsed into comfortable silence. It was nice to be honest. I took a deep breath of the crisp and cool air, a small grin on my face. Singapore observed his siblings, eyes narrowed. After a while, he relaxed, laying down on the grass. "Have you ever wanted to change who you were? Like swap lives?" he asked, breaking the silence. I blinked, unsure how to respond. I mean I have considered it before...but did I really want that?

"I...I don't really know," I answered truthfully. Would I? *Perhaps when I was younger I would have said yes but now I have friends...am I willing to give that up?* Singapore nodded as he replied, "I wouldn't want to swap my life for another. I like how it is to be honest. Even if I have to deal with my irritating siblings." I shrugged, turning to look at him. "What do you intend to do once you're done with schooling, Singapore?" I asked. He hummed softly as he lifted his arms up, staring at his hands.

"I really want to try for the *ambassadorial exams*. It's basically the exams to become an ambassador for the Kingdom of Silk. That way I can travel around more," he explained. I nodded as I blurted out, "I think you'd make a great ambassador." Singapore chuckled as I felt blood rush to my face.

"I hope so. It's not an easy exam to be honest and you actually have to have education in the Kingdom of Silk for pretty much your whole life in order to be selected for the exams. Only the people in this school are a special exception–we only have to study our university education there. So I might transfer out in Year 7 to go to Silk Road University."

"Huh, I never knew there was an exam for that. It seems like the Kingdom of Silk has an exam for almost everything," I commented.

Singapore made a face as he lowered his voice, "Between you and me, I personally think that Eastern Pangean kingdoms should cut

down on that. We deal with way too much exam stress so I'm really grateful I'm studying here. At least, here, I don't have to deal with it," I nodded in agreement. It was no secret that the kingdoms in Eastern Pangea had some of the toughest education regimes in the world. They focused heavily on academic excellence and talent, those who did not "pass" were considered "failures". The Kingdom of Silk also had a ranking system and those in the top 15 were treated like royalty while the bottom 15 were treated like scum. I couldn't imagine being in such a stifling environment and I never understood how Japan managed to survive in it. "Hey but don't tell anyone you heard me say that. Eastern Pangeans aren't big fans of people criticising their education system. We're a bit too prideful," he cracked a grin.

"Yea, I won't."

"Thanks."

We lapsed back into silence and I craned my neck upwards to look at the sky. The clouds floated by idly however, I couldn't help but feel my stomach churn. *Something bad is going to happen.* But surely that couldn't be right? Maybe I was just paranoid. *No, something bad is going to happen.* I could hear a bit of East's voice in that statement. I frowned, creasing my brows. *Trust me–your gut. There's something wrong!*

I was about to argue back when I suddenly saw a flock of birds that seemed like they were diving right into the courtyard. My eyes widened as my body reacted faster than my mind. "GET OUT OF THE WAY! THERE'S AN INCOMING BIRD FLOCK!" I screamed in panic. Everyone looked up as similar looks of horror crossed their faces. They shrieked as they ran towards the trees for shelter. Singapore's eyes widened as he looked at me and then at the incoming flock.

"What the–" he ducked as a black bird came swooping towards us. My eyes widened as I fell to the ground to protect myself. The bird cawed before landing next to me. Around us, similar situations were happening. I slowly got up as Singapore watched in confusion. "What is the royal eagle of your kingdom doing here..." he trailed off as I slowly unlatched the scroll in the eagle's collar. I frowned

harder as I unfurled the scroll and read through the details. But my confusion soon gave way to shock and fear.

Germany, I don't have much time but you mustn't come back to our Kingdom. The monster, it has risen and it is rapidly spreading throughout our kingdom. It will probably reach our palace in another hour or so. From there, it will continue to spread throughout the rest of Pangea. Promise me you'll stay at the academy. You will be safe there, high in the clouds. Wait for my next message, I promise we will fight against this evil force.

~Prussia

"What does it read?" Singapore asked curiously, "Germany?" He looked at me in worry but I was hardly processing his words. *No...no...what...the monster...* I felt my chest tighten as the scroll in my hand was crumpled. The contents of the scroll replayed in my mind and I felt my mind collapsing within itself. *This can't be happening...it was locked away! The monster shouldn't have escaped! Is Oma okay?*

"Hey! Hey! Answer me! Germany!" there was a sense of urgency in Singapore's voice as he shook me violently. I snapped out of my trance, looking at him dead in the eyes. Swallowing, I shakily passed him the letter. He read through it, hands shaking. "Holy shit," was all he said.

Around us, there were similar situations–people staring into thin air, too shocked to do a thing. My head spun and I let out a pained groan, clutching it. Singapore held onto me, anxiety all over his face. "We should get you to the nurse, come on," he tugged on my arm as he tried to lift me up but I was much heavier than he was, "Get up Germany! Come on!"

He continued to scream at me even but the rest of his words were fuzzy and I couldn't hear what he was saying. *Oh god I feel like I'm going to puke.* There was a loud groan as some words cut through, "...stay here...get...be back." I nodded dumbly, feeling like it needed some response. There was a loud sigh before being replaced by the sound of running. It was then my body finally gave up, my eyes rolled up into my head as I fell onto my side.

A/N: Shit just got real. ;-; Wonder how Poland is doing.

Ughhhhhhhhhhh school is a real killer. I think I've mentioned this a couple times but I'm probably not gonna post as frequently these days (proceeds to post consistently/hj) because I'm really busy with school and stuff. Exam season is approaching and I've gotta study for that as well...

***claps hands* Anyways! Enough of that boring stuff! *shoves it down a cliff* Did you know that what Germany is experiencing is (probably) psychological shock? According to Psychology today it is: "** *When you experience a surge of strong emotions and a corresponding physical reaction, in response to a (typically unexpected) event.* **"**

Writing Singapore and Germany's interaction is so fun and is probably my most favourite part of this book :D Okay, some questions for y'all to answer!

QUESTION TIME!

1) Who's your *least* favourite character in this book?

2) What is your pet peeve? I hate it whenever people come late for stuff even if I'm not totally affected by it. I just can't stand it and I hate being late for stuff myself (although I have been late a few times but I always apologise).

Alrighty! That's all the questions for today. If you haven't checked out my headcanons book for CH, please do! Thank you :D

[image]

I finally drew Ukraine after 1+ year. Also I did this during Math class >:) (don't be like me. I'm a horrible example.)

Awakening

[image]

"PASS TO ME POLAND!" Canada screeched as I hurriedly passed the floorball to him. He ran past South Korea before whacking it into their goal. *WHEEEEEET!* "SCOREEEEEEEE!" Japan cheered as me and Canada high-fived each other. America huffed as he took the ball from Italy as he set it in the centre of the playing field (which was half of our sports hall). "I'm going to win this time round!" he announced. Canada grinned, competitiveness blazing in his eyes. "Hah, I'd like to see you try!" he retorted, his grip tightening on his

We got into position before Japan blew the whistle again. America managed to get the ball from Canada and quickly passed it to South Korea who carefully shielded the ball so that none of us could steal it away. He aimed for our goal and shot. Ukraine reached out with her stick as she knocked it away. "DAMMIT!" he groaned as she shot it towards me. I smirked as I quickly shot it to Canada who ran past Italy and shot it into their goal with ease. *WHEEEEEEEEET!* "Point to Canada's team! Game end!" Japan held the scoreboard up. It showed: 12 : 9. My team had won! America's face turned dark as he stomped off to the side. Italy and South Korea looked at one another, sharing a silent conversation before sitting next to him. My team on the other hand...

"Let's go!!!" Canada cheered, wiping the sweat off his head with a towel. Ukraine grinned as she re-tied her hair, "You were amazing Nada! Thanks for inviting me to play!" Canada laughed, waving his hands. "It's nothing! You and Poland did super well as well. Haha, Poland, your passes are so good," he complimented me.

"Haha, thanks Canada. But seriously, give yourself more credit. You totally smashed the competition!"

"Heh, don't let Ame hear you. He's sulky enough as it is," Canada winked, taking a swig of water. I chuckled in response. America

could be a bit of a sore loser but at least he knew how to cheer up after an hour or so. We continued to chat amongst ourselves until Japan came over. "Do you guys want to continue?" she asked. Ukraine and I shrugged as we looked at Canada. He shook his head as he took another sip from his bottle, "Nah, 5 games is enough for today. I'm beat." Japan nodded as she motioned to South Korea. He made an 'okay' sign as he told America. There was a loud groan but nothing else. I began to pack up the equipment with my teammates and we continued our chatting. When we were done, all of us left the hall, making sure that we left nothing behind.

"Where do you wanna go now?" Ukraine asked. "I'm gonna head back to my dorm, I need to shower. How about you Maple?" America replied, fiddling with the collar of his shirt. Canada nodded as he headed over to his brother's side. "Same here!" Japan and South Korea chimed in. Ukraine hummed softly as she looked at me and Italy.

"Gotta prepare something for UNESCO's class on Monday," he simply said. I shrugged and replied, "Unless you're gonna head somewhere, I'm just going to head back to my dorm."

"Ah, I was gonna head to the courtyard to cool down. Do you wanna come along?" she asked. I nodded and she smiled slightly. We bade goodbye to the others before walking to the courtyard entrance. At first it was quiet and tense but slowly that melted away. "So, how's it being with Germany?" she asked, glancing over to me.

I found a small grin on my face as I answered, "Not as bad as I expected it to be honestly. He's a nice guy in reality, just a bit socially awkward that's all." Ukraine nodded as I asked her how her roommate was. The girls were luckier since there were fewer of them, some of them only needed to share rooms with one person rather than two. "Eh, Spain is nice enough although she is a little too talkative if you ask me. I'm just glad I don't have a third person living with us," she grimaced, "I don't like having to share my resting space with people." I nodded sympathetically. Ukraine was an introvert and she treasured her own "resting" time. Spain on the other hand loved chatting. She was a year older than me and was famous for being one of the prettiest students in our school. She was

the daughter of a well-known trader, Spanish Empire and was also extremely smart. Other than that, I didn't know much about her since I never really talked with her.

We entered the courtyard, the crisp and cool morning air filling my lungs. There were quite a few people around since it was the weekend. We took a seat at one of the wooden benches and I began to observe the people. Some of them were like us, chatting amongst their friends while others were playing games. There was also a group of students trying to climb–

"STOP CLIMBING THE TREE! YOU'LL GET INJURED!" a person screamed as they ran over to the group of students. Ah, it was Singapore. "I TOLD YOU STOP BEING SUCH A MONKEY! AISHHHHH, YOU BREAK YOUR BONES THEN HOW?!" he yelled angrily, waving his hands around. Which means... "It's the Musketeers again isn't it?" Ukraine finished my thought. I smirked, nodding. She chuckled as she continued to watch Singapore scolding them. "I feel bad for him. Taking care of people who should be taking care of you can't be easy," she told me. I tilted my head, deep in thought. She had a point to be frank. Sometimes I wondered how Singapore managed to do it.

"How is it being roommates with him though? Is he strict?" Ukraine's voice broke my train of thought. Shaking my head, I answered, "He's quite chill although if you ask me, he's a little bit like Germany; the two always study like crazy. He does know how to have fun on and off though." Ukraine nodded thoughtfully.

"Kaz has told me some things about Singapore which he heard from Malaysia. It's a nice surprise to know he's not a strict person unlike what Kaz painted him like."

"Heh, he's probably strict when it comes to his brothers."

"Hmmm I guess so. Can't really blame Singapore though right? How else is he going to keep his siblings in check?"

I nodded in agreement as I watched the Musketeers run off. Singapore huffed before he walked back to a tree as he disappeared from view. We lapsed into silence, both of us enjoying the scenery.

Just then, there was another loud scream. "THERE'S AN INCOMING FLOCK OF BIRDS! GET AWAY!" *Germany?* I didn't have any time to react as me and Ukraine were caught in the "bird storm". She screamed, swatting her hands as the birds flew past us. I felt their talons scrap at my skin and I felt a sense of panic grip me. Suddenly, there was a loud screech and I felt something land on my left shoulder. Looking up, I was surprised that it was Balint–my pet. *What is he doing here?* Balint pointed one wing towards the tree. *Head there,* he seemed to tell me. Grabbing a panicking Ukraine by the wrist, I dragged her towards the tree. A brown bird (I think a falcon?) came after us. I placed Ukraine behind my back, unsure if it was going to attack us. Fortunately it didn't and simply landed on the branch above us. It let out a shrill cry, nearly deafening us. Ukraine jolted out of her panic as she looked up. Balint nudged me as he let out a cry.

"Ow ow, okay okay, come here," I held my arm as he hopped onto it. I winced slightly, feeling his talons sink into my arm. It was then, I noticed a small collar on his neck. There was a scroll attached to it. "For me?" I asked him. He dipped his head as if saying 'yes'. I gently unhooked the collar and unfurled the scroll carefully as I began to read it. My eyes widened with each word as anger, fear and worry clouded over me. *What is going on?!* The world began to fade as I sank deeper into my panic. *Monster? What...why have I never heard of it before...*

"POLAND!" I snapped out of my stupor, facing a horrified Ukraine. "Did you...is your letter the same...about...about a monster?" she stammered. I nodded dumbly as she stared into space, petrified. My heart raced as I clutched my chest in a bid at trying to make the pain stop. It didn't work. I sank onto the ground, eyes wide. A part of me was aware that Balint was nudging me but that part of me felt so very far away from me. Suddenly, my body was jerked back to the present by an almost imperceptible ringing. My body began to calm down although I still felt like I was floating. A part of me realised that the courtyard had quietened down and Balint had stopped nudging me as well, simply staring off into space as if in a catatonic state. That was my last conscious thought before everything went blank.

*

When I came to, I found myself lying on a bed in the infirmary. Next to me was Ukraine who was sitting up and rubbing her eyes, looking around bewildered. "How...how on earth did we get here?" she asked me. "I don't know. The last thing I remember was everyone calming down and then it went blank," I replied, my head feeling heavy and foggy. It was like someone had stuffed cotton balls into my brain, muffling all my thoughts. Looking around, I realised that the infirmary was filled with students all laying down or sitting up, looking around in confusion. Just then, I spotted Red Cross and Crescent. Red Crescent was the first to notice me and quickly hurried over. "Ah, you two are awake. How are you feeling?" she asked politely.

"What happened? Where's the royal messengers?" Ukraine butted in instead of replying. Red Crescent's face darkened as she pursed her lips as if contemplating what to tell us. "I'm afraid I can't. It's not my place to tell you unfortunately. But if you tell me how you're feeling, you *might* get the information," she told us. Ukraine snarled, her eyes flashing dangerously. I reached over and placed a hand on her shoulder. She glared at me as I stared at her. *Listen to her.* It was for the best despite me worrying as well about Balint. *I hope he's okay.* She looked like she wanted to argue but backed down. Looking back at Red Crescent, I replied, "I'm feeling okay but my head is a bit heavy." She hummed softly, nodding. "Rest for a while more then I'll come back and check on you okay? I'll bandage those scraps from the birds when I do," she told me. I nodded, laying back down.

"And how about you? How are you feeling?" she asked Ukraine who was scowling away. "Fine," she responded. Red Crescent nodded before asking her to rest for a while more. Then, she left to attend to the other students who were awake. Ukraine huffed loudly, cursing as she flopped back on her bed. I tilted my head to observe the rest of the infirmary. Many of the students were awake and were softly chatting with their friends although their gaze seemed a little blank to me. *Maybe they're still in shock.*

Red Crescent came back a while later with some bandages, plasters and ointments. Asking me to sit up, she quickly helped apply the

ointments on my wounds. I winced in pain, biting my lip. "You're lucky these aren't too deep. If there is redness or swelling around your wounds, come back immediately okay?" she told me as she bandaged me. I nodded and she patted my shoulder. "Alright, I'm done! You can go now. You too Ukraine," she told us, "Please head to the hall straight away. Principal UN wants to address everyone." Ukraine leapt to her feet immediately, muttering thanks before rushing off.

I thanked Red Crescent before hopping off the bed. My head felt better and I sighed softly in relief. As I walked out of the infirmary, I spotted a familiar face. *Germany.* He was with Red Cross and it looked like he was getting discharged as well. "Germany!" he turned to face me, surprised. He waved back however. Red Cross bowed slightly when he saw me, a grim expression on his face. "You can go now," he told Germany, "Please head to the hall straight away. Principal UN has a message for everyone." Germany nodded, thanking him before walking towards me.

"You've got a few scratches," he noted. "Yea, from the birds. They'll heal though," I replied before lowering my voice, "Do you know what this address is about? Or what happened after the birds attacked?"

"I don't remember much. The last thing I remember was reading the letter from my–" he stopped abruptly, as he bit his lip. I watched him, worried. After a moment, he continued, "The letter was from Kaiserin Prussia about a monster and then everything became a blur before I passed out." I nodded as I told him my version of the events.

"So it's not a joke," he murmured, furrowing his brows, "The monster really has broken free."

"What monster?" I asked, "Surely it isn't– It can't be right?"

Germany nodded his head, smiling grimly. "There's no other monster that my kingdom has been holding back that would warrant a letter from the Kaiserin," he told me, "It has to be *that* one." My heart dropped. "So that means...the...the monster that the Light Kingdom defeated after the war. It's back?" I asked shakily.

"It seems so. But I could be wrong of course!" he tried to reassure me, "Let's hear what Principal UN has to say. Perhaps this is all just a misunderstanding." I nodded but I knew that this was just false hope. I already knew the truth. We reached the hall, the tall wooden doors looming over us. "After you," Germany said, standing to the side. I pushed open the door, taking a step into the hall. *Alright, it's time to find out what the hell is going on.*

A/N: *dances happily* Yayyyy another chapter and it's not late :D

For people who are wondering why Poland and friends are playing floorball instead of hockey, there are 2 reasons.

A) We are doing a floorball module in my school now and I really wanted to incorporate it into my book cus it's finally a sport I like. (And I'm better at it) I also know the rules better (at least the modified version) so it's easier to write out what's going on.

B) They aren't allowed to play hockey in the school because there have been damages caused due to the game.

Also, I feel like I'm on a writing drug or something. I MEAN LOOK:

[image]

[image]

[image]

It's crazy how much I've written and I really want to thank everyone for making this possible. We're almost at 6K! XD I hope to finish this book by the end of this year but something tells me this is gonna drag till latest half of 2025. Ahhhhhhhhhh-- Hehe, when this book hits 10K, I'll plan something else :)

ALRIGHT! QUESTION TIME!!! :D

1) What is your favourite Countryhuman book? (I'm running out of books on this site to read help lmao)
Personally, This Damn Hat which I finished recently was so good (yes, I'm aware it's RusAme BUT THERE WAS A BIGGER PLOT AND I LIKED IT *Struggles to explain*). Then there's **R**ussian **R**oulette and **W**here **W**inter **M**eets **S**ummer which I'm currently re-reading. All these can be found in my Best Books Countryhumans list. (**RR** is written by Miriorite/Kai while **WWMS** is written by Onyxcrow)

2) Who is someone you want me to draw?

Finally, have some BbD drawings! I posted these in my artbook but I also wanted to share them here! (Thanks for the 1K on there btw :D)

[image]

Kinda old art but these are the other "main characters" from this book.

[image]

[image]

My friend made this into a sticker lmao. Feel free to use this (image above) as a sticker. As for the reason why Germany's "drawing" is like that...well, I didn't find a suitable base (on Pinterest) for him so yea. I like the drawing of Singa so much lmao. I wanna make a mug like that. And the best part of being an artist is making you're own wallpaper :D (The SG drawing currently is now used as my computer wallpaper)

Alrighty! I'll see y'all soon! When we return, things are about to get really serious. (Act 2: Revelations is kinda split into 2 parts in a way and I think I'll explain this further when the future chapters are published. But currently, we are about to finish half of Act 2! Yay :)

Have a great day ahead!

Let me go

[image]

The hall was packed with students and staff. Italy spotted me and Poland and waved us over. I tapped Poland on the shoulder as I pointed towards his friends. We hurried over, taking the seats that they had reserved for us. "Poland? What happened to you?" South Korea asked, noticing the bandages on the Polish's body.

"I'll explain later, anyone know why we're here?" Poland diverted the question away. The others shook their heads. "Dunno, they just told us to come here for a Principal address," Japan murmured, frowning as she played with her fingers, "I hope it's nothing too serious."

"Yea..." I answered weakly, staring at the ground. Despite the calm facade I was putting up, internally, I was extremely anxious. I tapped my foot impatiently, silently praying for the assembly to start. Poland and the others were chatting and I envied how carefree he was acting. *Is he even that concerned? Maybe not. I mean, the monster will probably only take over my kingdom. Probably. I think–*
"You good Germs?" Italy's voice snapped me out of my thoughts. I scowled at him and he quickly put his hands up in mock surrender. "I told you to stop calling me that," I complained, fiddling with the cuff of my sleeve.

"You weren't responding when I called your name *or* your title so I figured I might as well use the nickname you oh-so hate," Italy sassed back to me. I sighed and rolled my eyes. "But seriously, you good? You seem troubled," Italy asked again. I hesitated but slowly shook my head. He patted me on the back assuringly. "It'll be fine Germany. I mean how bad can it be? It's probably the MalPhilIndo trio again," he joked, chuckling. I gave a nervous smile, knowing that he was completely off. Italy was about to continue when UN started his speech.

A hush fell over the hall as UN stepped onto the stage. His normally

calm visage was marred by fear as he stumbled onto the stage. His hair was unkempt as if he had just woken up and he nervously adjusted the papers in his hand. "Good...good afternoon to everyone," he started off, a noticeable tremble in his voice. Murmurs went through the hall–everyone was questioning why our principal was acting so strangely. Japan was frowning as she commented, "Seems like this assembly is serious huh? I've never seen UN so frazzled." The others nodded as me and Poland locked eyes. *This isn't gonna end well is it?* His gaze seemed to say. *No, no it isn't*, I answered back. He sighed, looking towards the stage.

"It has come to our attention that there was a bird attack at the courtyard earlier this morning. Those who found themselves in the infirmary after that with no explanation, if you could stand up please?" I stood up warily, surveying the hall as many other students stood up. "The school owes you an explanation for what happened after the attack. Due to the shock the news caused, Vice-Principal INTERPOL casted a catatonic spell to facilitate an easier trip to the infirmary," UN continued. Murmurs rippled through the hall as me and Poland shared a look with each other. A few students still looked confused while others looked extremely concerned. "What news?" some whispered. *News about the monster.* UN waited until the murmuring died down before continuing his speech.

"The birds came to deliver the news of the rising of the monster. For those who don't know who the monster is, it is the one that the Light Kingdom banished at the end of the war," more murmuring. UN paused for a while, his Adam's apple bobbing nervously. I noticed NATO moving over to EU , whispering something to him. *I wonder what that's about.* When everyone had calmed down, he continued but I had already tuned him out. My heart was racing and I felt like I couldn't breath properly. Was the hall always this stuffy? I pulled at the collar of my shirt, feeling extremely uncomfortable.

"But don't worry. Pangea Preparatory Academy is safely guarded and self-sustaining. Protective measures have been made by Prof. EU and Mr NATO. The monster will not be able to come here and everyone will be safe. However, until the threat blows over, no one

is allowed to exit the school grounds. We cannot risk anyone getting hurt." My eyes widened and before I could comprehend what I was doing, I was standing up and yelling, "NO!"

The hall went silent and I felt my face burn with shame. However, my body refused to move, keeping me there. "What do you mean by 'no' Prince Germany?" UN asked calmly although his shaking hands betrayed his true feelings. My mouth was faster than my brain as I said, "No! You can't keep me here! I need to go–"

"If I may ask you, Prince Germany, what were the Queen's instructions?" A chill went down my spine as I heard the question. UN's void black eyes stared at me and I gulped. Italy was tugging on the hem of my shirt. A warning. *Stand down.* I lowered my head, ready to say my answer and apologise when suddenly, America cut in.

"Germany's right. Sir, respectfully please let all the crown royals go back to their kingdoms. Surely this is a time when the people need us right?" America smiled, a challenging glint in his eyes. UN narrowed his eyes as he turned to look at INTERPOL who was half hidden backstage. They seemed to share a silent conversation before he turned back to look at us. "As I said earlier, this is for protection. If the heirs go and they die, who's going to lead the kingdom? Have you thought about the royals who only have one heir?" UN countered, "And I'm sure the kingdoms' respective armies are fighting it as we speak. The Light Kingdom especially."

"Ah, but that's you who thinks the kingdoms' armies are fighting. What if they are already captured and the kingdoms are destroyed? There isn't much use for an heir then is there?" America challenged. UN fell silent as the hall erupted into chaos. I looked at America in shock and he smirked at me. Canada shook his head, sweeping away the strands that fell in front of his face as he sighed, "You really like stirring up trouble don't you?" America's smirk only grew wider as the noise grew louder and louder. "Ha I like to think–"

"ENOUGH! SILENCE!" UN roared. The hall went silent immediately as they stared at him in fear. "The school's decision is final. No one is allowed to leave the school grounds. That is final! And if I catch any of you plotting to leave the school, I will not hesitate to lock

you in your rooms!" UN's cold words made the room freeze. Prof. AU looked like she wanted to go up the stage but was stopped by NATO and EU. She scowled, turning away, stalking off to the back of the hall. As she passed by our row, her gaze and mine connected. However, I quickly looked away, staring at my feet.

After waiting a while more, UN dismissed us. I got ready to leave when UN called me, "Prince Germany, a word please? Alone." I stiffened up but nodded. Italy shot me a worried look but I flicked my hand upward. *Go. I'll be fine.* He looked conflicted but quickly exited the hall. I made my way to where UN and the other teachers were.

"Principal UN," I bowed slightly. He motioned for me to take a seat. I nervously took a seat, tapping a finger against my thigh. ASEAN, EU, INTERPOL and NATO were staring down at me and it felt extremely unnerving. Ms NASA was at the side with Mr ROSCOSMOS, watching quietly. UN paced back and forth, rubbing his forehead before he turned to look at me. He looked confused.

"Why do you want to go back?! Here, at least you'll be safe. If you go back, you risk getting killed!" he asked me, incredulous.

"I don't care! My grandmother is there and so are my people. I can't just stay here and pretend that everything is fine! So please, I'm begging you, let me go back." My fists were clenched as I tried to hold back my anger.

"It's not safe! Doing so is disobeying the orders we were given. And if I let you go, that means I have to let others go! I am not willing to let the rest get injured. So I'm *also* begging you to understand my side," UN told me, desperation in his voice. My fists tightened as I glared at him. *Stupid man.*

"Germany, you have to understand where we are coming from. As a school, our job is to also protect our students. Even if the measures are harsh," INTERPOL told me gently.

"Well screw trying to protect the students! We're stuck here like caged birds while our kingdoms are completely ravaged to the ground huh?! Our loved ones could be dying because you stupid

assholes decided that we should be locked up here instead of helping them!" I was extremely worked up and my harsh words were physical proof of it. It was the very first time I had ever been rude towards my teachers but I couldn't care less in my rage.

"Language Germany," ASEAN warned.

I huffed, a crazed smile on my face. "Language? You're asking me to keep watch of my *fucking* language when *my* kingdom is in trouble?" I let out a half-crazed laugh, "Where the hell are your priorities?!" NASA had already stood up, looking ready to intervene. UN raised a hand, stopping her as he continued staring at me. I looked back, all caution thrown against the wind. *Come at me. I dare you.* A part of me was aware that this was a stupid choice but I didn't care. UN's body shook, barely hiding his anger as he said, "I understand–"

"IF YOU DID THEN I WOULD BE OUT OF THIS STUPID HALL RIGHT NOW!" my anger had finally taken over me, "MY KINGDOM IS IN DANGER FOR GOD SAKE!"

"Enough!" INTERPOL finally cut in, eyes glowing. I looked at her, incredulous as she rubbed her temples. "Clearly, this is going nowhere. Germany, back to your dorm now!" she ordered me. "Gladly!" I snapped, standing up as the chair clattered to the ground noisily. I stormed out of the hall, cursing. *Fuck them all.*

When I exited the hall, to my surprise, Poland and the others were waiting for me. My glare softened as my shoulders slumped. "I heard a lot of screaming from the hall. Are you okay?" Japan asked me. I shook my head dejectedly, sighing. She gave a half smile, patting me comfortingly. America was leaning against a pillar, a frown on his face. "Just what did that old man yap about now?" he asked. "Ame, respect," Canada chided him lightly.

America rolled his eyes as he jerked his head at me. Sighing, I recalled the events. When I was done, he and Poland looked ready to murder UN. "How could he?! That...that bastard!" America swore, clenching his fists. "Is he dumb or something?" Poland looked at the doors of the hall incredulously, "Are our teachers dumb?!"

South Korea frowned worriedly, biting his cheek. "Is there nothing that we can do? Are we seriously trapped here?" he asked, tapping his foot. I shook my head, a grim expression on my face. "Can't we try to sneak away in the night? Besides, I'm sure there's others who feel exactly how we're feeling," Japan suggested.

Canada shook his head immediately as he chimed in, "Knowing that the protective measures have been set up by EU and NATO, there's pretty much no way we can get out. They're extremely smart when it comes to setting up protective measures and stuff like that. There's no way we'd be able to sneak out."

His words weighed heavily on us as the mood further dimmed. "But we can try, no? Gather a sizable group of supporters. I mean how hard can that be?" Italy shrugged. Canada made an expression that seemed to be a combination of being constipated and confused. "Great idea Italy!" America grinned, "Maybe, if we have a large enough group, we can perhaps overrule UN's directive."

"Yea!" the rest nodded enthusiastically.

"Alright then, it's settled, later during dinner, we're gonna try and get as many supporters as we can," I smiled. Everyone nodded their approval and we made a couple more arrangements such as when to meet before heading back to our dorm rooms.

*

Poland and I walked back in silence, each of us deep in thought. "So erm, what were you doing this morning?" he broke the silence. "Huh?" I stared at him dumbly as he flushed red. "Sorry, you don't have to answer. I just thought we could use something normal y'know," he shrugged, looking away, "But it's dumb so erm...forget it huh?" He fell silent, walking a little faster.

"Hey, I appreciate the effort," I tried for a smile as I tapped him on the shoulder. He frowned when he saw me and I immediately dropped the smile. *I probably looked scary.* "I spent time with Singapore today while he watched the MalPhilIndo trio," I continued, trying to push past the awkwardness. Poland nodded as he told me what he'd done. "Huh, sounds fun," I commented.

"You should join us one day. I'm sure the others wouldn't mind. Japan and Italy would probably be ecstatic even," he chuckled. I nodded, telling him I might. He grinned, eyes lighting up as he clapped me on the back. We continued to chat until we reached our dorm. However, a figure at our door stopped us.

"Hello Prince Germany. Hello Prince Poland," AU leaned against our door, casually looking at her nails. We stopped in our tracks, stunned. Why was she...

"Ms AU?! What are you doing here?" Poland spluttered. She rolled her eyes, walking towards us. My eyes narrowed, my heart beating anxiously. *I'm not in trouble right?* "That was quite the show you put on there earlier in the hall," she started off, crossing her arms.

"Mam, if this is about–" I started before getting cut off.

"I did find it rather interesting and you brought up some good points," she mused. Poland and I shared a look, confused. *Huh?* AU mused for a while longer before clapping her hands together, "But I'm not here to berate you of course! In fact, I'd like to make you an offer. So what do you say?"

A/N: Shouty Germany is fun to write. :D I wonder what's gonna happen next... Hehe, AU is gonna be appearing a little bit more in future chapters. Stuff's gonna get real crazy too.

Also, I'm tired of censoring the f-bomb. I might continue it in future chapters but I think 2 f-bombs will be fineeeeeeeee--

Also, funny story. So I was in school and I told my friend, "Yea, I read finished." She stared at me and went, "Girlie, your English!" I got really confused and she literally had to explain, "IT'S NOT READ FINISHED! IT'S FINISHED READING YOU DUMBA$$!"

Oops...I actually don't know if it's correct but I'm wagering that since I asked a few people and they said Finished Reading is correct, then erm, yeaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa THIS IS A REMINDER THAT MY ENGLISH IS KINDA SHIT HAHAHAHAHAHAHHAHAHAHA--

As the years go by, I think my English level just keeps going down down down.

Aight, QUESTION TIMEEEEE! >:)

1) Who here hates UN?

2) Evil ASEAN or Good ASEAN? (Just what are your thoughts. May or may not affect next chapter)

3) Which characters' POV do you want to see in the future? (eg. ASEAN, AU, Prussia etc)

(Also, to Person_Meh I know I said I'd write an extra scene for Ame and Rus's fight scene but I SWEAR it won't be long till they're fight appears soon. I swear. I managed to find a way to incoporate it into the storyline. I SWEAR IT'S GONNA APPEAR!)

Honestly, when this book is over, I might just allow a month plus worth of writing requests and shit for fun. I dunno, we'll see I suppose. Anyways, I'll see y'all soon. Stay safe! (and for artwork I said I'd do, expect to see it in the future chapter soon.)

BYEEEEEEEEE-

Supporter

[image]

1 and a half hours ago...

"Oh god this is bad! This is *so* bad!" UN was pacing back and forth in his office, one hand on his head, "IT'S A DISASTER! IT'S A NIGHTMARE! What are we going to do?! What am *I* going to do?!" I nudged EU as I tilted my head towards our panicking principal. "What do we do with him?" I drawled, "Do we just wait for WHO to come and knock some sense into her brother or do we do it ourselves?" He hid his smile behind a cough, trying to look serious but failing as he whispered, "I believe we do the latter." I rolled my eyes as he stood up from his seat, gently tapping UN on the shoulder.

UN's eyes widened as he stopped dead in his tracks. "UN, calm down. It's not the end of the world," EU said calmly. UN laughed–no barked–harshly, hissing, "Not the end of the world? You count having a monster who probably can't be killed NOT the end of the world?! God, I wish I had *your* optimism!" EU took a step back, eyes flashing as he bowed his head. UN continued to pace, muttering senselessly to himself. EU sat back down next to me, eyes wide open as if saying, *You're turn.* I ignored him and turned my attention to the others in the room. ASEAN was at the side, leaning against the wall, eerily silent as he bit on his nails nervously. NATO, NASA and ROSCOSMOS were opposite me but NASA was extremely pale as her brother and ROSCOSMOS tried to reassure her. Despite the brave facade they put up, I could hear the quiver in both their voices. INTERPOL had yet to arrive since she was still helping transport the cationic students to the infirmary. If I had to guess, me and EU were probably the most collected people in the room at that moment. Even then, I could tell that EU was extremely nervous as he twirled a lock of hair, tugging on it every few seconds. Hell, even I was! My left hand kept fiddling with the earring on my left ear as I tapped the couch with my right hand.

After another few minutes of anxious waiting, INTERPOL finally arrived. She looked haggard, her usually neat bun coming loose. "I'm here! Let's start the meeting now!" she barked, throwing all pleasantries out of the window. Everyone, except UN, snapped out of their panicking as they quickly arranged themselves. INTERPOL grabbed UN's shoulder, turning him to face her. "Focus UN. Focus!" she told him firmly, hitting his cheek a couple times. He blinked a few times slowly as if awoken from a deep slumber. Realising that we were all waiting, he hurriedly apologised and took a seat at his desk.

"Right...so...I suppose you know why we're here today right?" he asked nervously. Everyone nodded as he shifted in his seat. "Right, so erm...we...we..." he struggled to even be coherent and I couldn't help but scoff. That brought everyone's attention to me.

"Why are you scoffing? Do you know something we don't?" ROSCOSMOS narrowed his eyes at me in suspicion.

I rolled my eyes, standing up, "You know something UN? None of this would have happened if you'd actually listened to me and told the truth! We might have been able to prevent this from happening! Now look, the truth's out, everyone here knows and *they are panicking!*"

ASEAN's eyes widened as he demanded angrily, "What truth? UN answer this!" UN stumbled over his words until I finally butted in, "That small glimmer of hope that the surge in energy levels around Apophis's area wasn't from it? Yea, no those were caused by Apophis itself *not* people practising their abilities. I told good ol' UN to tell you but did he listen? NO!" I glared at UN who was looking down at the ground. ASEAN's face went through a roulette of emotions as he asked UN if it was true. UN nodded meekly and ASEAN went livid.

"YOU HID THIS FROM US? *FROM ME*?! WHY THE HELL UN?!" he yelled. The others nodded, frowns on their faces. Except for INTERPOL, her face remained as impassive as ever. I couldn't help the small smirk that appeared on my face. "I THOUGHT I COULD TRUST YOU! YOU KNOW I HAVE A FAMILY! HOW DO YOU THINK I FEEL WHEN YOU DIDN'T TELL ME AND NOW I FIND OUT

ABOUT IT AND MY SONS ARE IN THE INFIRMARY... YOU BASTARD!" ASEAN swore, raising his hand to punch UN but was stopped by INTERPOL.

"ORDER PLEASE!" she boomed, "All this fighting is getting us nowhere. Please, I understand your anger. I'm angry as well but this is not how we should be acting. UN, you have a lot of explaining to do but now we need to devise a plan on how to properly break the news to the students and set up our defence plans." Somehow that brought back the calm to the room as ASEAN's body sagged. INTERPOL released her grip on his wrist as she took a seat.

"UN, you will write a script now detailing what happened after the birds attacked the students. They'll want an explanation. Reassure them that we're okay as a school and that they'll be safe here. EU and NATO, review those defence plans. ASEAN and AU, I want you to make the announcement to get all students to the hall by 11.30am. ROSCOSMOS and NASA, you two grab all the teachers and explain the situation as best as you can. We'll call a staff meeting after the students' one. All good?" she asked, rattling off instructions. We nodded in agreement and quickly went our separate ways.

As me and ASEAN walked to the announcement room, I couldn't help but notice him clenching his fists tightly. "Still mad?" I asked. "How could he hide such a thing?! And you! If you knew why didn't you say anything?!" he glared at me as I shrank back, "I'm mad at the both of you! So leave me alone!" He stalked forward as I bit my lip. *He's right...I should have told him at least once I knew...*

We arrived at the announcement room where ASEAN started getting everything ready while I stood quietly by the door. "You'll make the announcement," he told me gruffly and I nodded. We fell back into an uncomfortable silence and I couldn't help but feel smothered by it.

"I'm sorry!" I blurted out before slapping my hand over my mouth. *Goddamnit AU you stupid bitch.*

"What?" ASEAN turned to look at me, emerald eyes filled with confusion. I opened and closed my mouth as I struggled to reply. He

sighed, turning away from me. "Look, I know earlier I said I was mad at you but I'm not really. I just said it in the heat of the moment. I'm sorry," he mumbled, shoulders slumping, "It's not your fault AU."

I stood in silence, unsure what to do or say. After a beat, I went up to ASEAN, tapping him on the shoulder. "I'm still sorry for hiding it. I should have told you earlier but I didn't want to risk panicking everyone...I suppose...I suppose UN's words got to me. And I...I had been hoping he was right," I looked downwards, expecting for ASEAN to blame me again. Instead, he sighed, patting my shoulder. "It's fine, I understand where you're coming from. Come on, let's just get this announcement out to the students now," he told me. I cracked a smile as I took the microphone from his hand. He gave me a thumbs up, a small reassuring smile on his face, "We're ready."

"Good morning students. Principal UN has requested that all students are to head to the hall for a meeting at 11.30am. I repeat, *all* students are to head to the hall at 11.30am for a meeting. Thank you," I finished before passing the microphone back to ASEAN.

"You good?" he asked as I leaned against the wall.

"Ugh, I feel sick. Those poor kids..." I mumbled.

He smiled grimly as he packed up the stuff, "Well, at least both of us don't have to explain it to them. Our job is done. Now we have to wait." I only groaned louder. Hopefully the students would take the news well.

*

"The school's decision is final. No one is allowed to leave the school grounds. That is final! And if I catch any of you plotting to leave the school, I will not hesitate to lock you in your rooms!" my eyes widened as I found my body working on its own accord, pulling me towards the stage. EU and NATO promptly stopped me as NATO warned, "Don't AU." I huffed irritatedly as I turned around with a swish of my cloak heading off to the back of the hall. As I walked past the students, one of their gazes connected with mine before he quickly looked away. *It's the boy who yelled earlier. Germany right?* I

mused, standing quietly at the back of the hall as I watched on. UN soon dismissed the students but requested for Germany to stay back.

I blended into the shadows as I stood very very still. I didn't really have to hide but I feared that if I was amongst my colleagues, I'd be forced to agree with their statements. Afterall, student safety *was* the top–

"Well screw trying to protect the students! We're stuck here like caged birds while our kingdoms are completely ravaged to the ground huh?! Our loved ones could be dying because you stupid assholes decided that we should be locked up here instead of helping them!" Germany's outburst jolted me out of my thoughts. *Huh, interesting.* ASEAN said something about language which I didn't catch. Whatever it was, it only made the prince more mad.

"Language? You're asking me to keep my *fucking* language when *my kingdom* is in trouble?! The hell are your priorities?!" he shrieked. I couldn't help but raise my eyebrows. This was nothing like how he acted in my class in all the time I've taught him which was a long time considering I've taught him since Year 3. He'd always been a reserved kid, never liking to answer the questions I asked in class. Only when I directly asked him did I ever get an answer. Furthermore, he only asked me his questions at the end of class. At first it was annoying but over time I began to understand why he did so. One incident when he was in Year 3 stood out to me the most.

"Explain how earthquakes occur and why most happen in Eastern Pangea," I read the question aloud from my guidebook as I surveyed the class. Mentally, I groaned when I noticed the number of students barely paying attention. Russia wasn't even trying to hide himself sleeping– something I was extremely flabbergasted by. He never seemed to learn despite my punishments and lectures so in the end I gave up altogether. At least he was actually passing my class so perhaps he was listening after all. Oh who was I kidding? He probably cheated off one of his classmates or even his seniors. Perhaps it was that kid he hung around with...China I think.

"Anyone want to try answering?" I asked. A person raised their hand meekly and I nodded. "Please stand," I told them, "I want to hear you

loud and clear." The student stood up and I realised it was Germany. The class seemed to stir then as murmurs went through the room.

"The earthquakes...occur when...when...when the faults they erm...they shift...and stored...erm...elastic-strain energy it erm...seismic waves are released and they shake the ground," he stuttered, "Eastern Pangea however is more prone to earthquakes because...because they...the land sits on...on more faults."

I smiled, clapping. "Great job Germany! Spot on answer!" I beamed, not noticing the glares his classmates had given him, "Everyone clap for Germany!"

No one did as the murmuring became louder. "Smarty-pants teacher's pet!" some spat out, "God why is he even here?" Germany shrank in his seat as I glared furiously at the students. "I can hear you!" I reminded them and silence fell upon the class. "Don't say such mean things. Germany answered my question when none of you did because all of you were busy sleeping! If you spent as much time paying attention as he did, maybe you'd be on an equal level as him!" I scolded them harshly. They shrank back, heads bowed low.

"Now if anyone can answer this..."

The end of class was signalled by the chimes of the bells on the top of the teachers' living quarters. I nodded to the class that they could pack up and they immediately did so before rushing out. Germany was oddly slow in his packing that day, often taking out his stuff before repacking them again. Walking over to him, I leaned against the table opposite him.

"Ms AU! Is there something you need from me?" he asked me politely in a quiet voice.

I shook my head, smiling. ***Polite as ever.*** *"I was just wondering if you're okay after all those things your classmates called you," I told him. A look of anguish crossed his face but it soon disappeared as he forced out a smile, "It's fine. I'm used to it. If there's nothing else, may I go now?" It became apparent that he did not want the conversation to continue any further. I nodded, letting him go despite the multitude of questions I had. "You can speak with me anytime if you have trouble. Doesn't have to be*

Geog related either," I told him. He nodded awkwardly before hastily leaving. I dropped my smile, exchanging it for a frown.

Oh Germany…just what are you hiding?

While I was aware of Germany's past and his ancestry, I never felt it defined who he was as a person. Unfortunately, it was always the opposite for the students in my class. No one liked him and in turn, he shut many others out. A few students had actually approached me (these were those in my form class which were often those in the lower years) often telling me how they wished they could talk to the smartest people in my class. I always pointed Germany out as a prime example and told them to go meet him. In a way, I guess I thought it'd help inter-level bonding and help him make more friends but it seemed like I was wrong. Too many times I had my students come back to me, a sullen expression on their faces, the same sentence repeated over and over. "He ran away the second he saw me!" It got to the point that eventually, I simply directed them to Japan or Canada whenever they wanted some tutoring or advice. Perhaps it was best if I didn't pressure Germany. He was–

"IF YOU DID THEN I WOULD BE OUT OF THIS STUPID HALL RIGHT NOW!" Germany yelled, jolting me out of my thoughts. "I WOULD BE OUT THERE! MY KINGDOM IS IN DANGER AND YOU PEOPLE DON'T EVEN LET ME HELP MY CITIZENS!" he continued to yell. I squinted, noticing thin shadows crowding around his figure. Flashes of purple appeared in them and my interest began to pique. *Huh...so purple isn't just a trademark of* ***his*** *ability...*

"ENOUGH! This is going nowhere. Germany, back to your dorm now!" INTERPOL interjected. Germany huffed, standing up as his chair clattered to the ground. "Gladly!" He stormed out of the hall, passing by me. I stiffened up as I watched him exit the hall, slamming the doors shut. UN slumped, burying his head in his hands. The others went to comfort him as my mind raced.

I have to do something! UN isn't going to let Germany go but it's not good for Germany to stay either. I racked my brains, wondering what little assistance I could give the prince. Suddenly, I had a lightbulb moment. *Egypt! Of course!* A grin on my face, I quickly slipped out of the hall, hurrying to Germany's dorm room.

He's going to love this.

*

Or so I expected. Instead, I was met with hostility from him.

"What do you want Ms AU?" Germany hissed. My eyes widened in confusion as he glared at me. Poland looked on awkwardly although I sensed his own hostility. *Careful AU.* I couldn't blame either of them. If I was being approached by someone of a so-called "higher power" and what I presumed to be the "enemies", I'd too be equally as hostile. Furthermore, Germany's emotions were probably still running high from his recent confrontation. One wrong move and I'd have a huge problem on my hands. *I have to tread carefully.* Coughing lightly before asking if we could head into their dorm.

"It would be best if we did this in private," I explained. Germany's eyes narrowed as Poland placed a hand on his shoulder. He whispered something to the German and I saw Germany's mouth twitch downwards. "Fine, you can come in," he told me, crossing his arms. I smiled, thanking him as I stood to the side to let him open the door.

I took a seat on one of the chairs as Germany and Poland sat on the other two. I noticed that Germany purposely sat on the one furthest from me but decided to ignore it. "I have a proposition for both of you. You want to go back right? I can help with that." Poland and Germany's eyes widened as Poland questioned, "Are you serious? You...you can help?!" There was a quiver of excitement to his voice as he said that. "Germany! This is great we–"

"You're lying," Germany interjected, voice low. The shadows were back, infused with purple which was much clearer. For a brief second, I swore I saw a set of yellow eyes but they disappeared as soon as they appeared. "You're lying...this...this is some plot, isn't it?! You're working with them! The second we say yes to your deal you're going to lock us up!" his voice was on the edge of hysteria as he stood up, "No! We...we didn't plan anything. We're going to stay here! Like good students!" I shook my head but that only seemed to fuel his agitation. "You're lying!" he shrieked, startling Poland.

"Germany, calm down. Let Ms AU explain. I'm sure there's–"

"WHY CAN'T YOU SEE! THIS IS A PLOY! *SHE'S* WORKING WITH UN AND THOSE...THOSE BASTARDS!" he cried.

"I assure you I'm not," I said in a gentle voice but to no avail. Germany's shadows only grew larger and larger as his breathing quickened. I took a deep breath as I stood up. This was going nowhere and Germany looked close to exploding with power (again)–a risk I was unwilling to take.

"Alright, I'm going now. You just...erm...calm down and if you change your mind, come talk to me. I'll be in my office," I told him, a forced smile on my face. He glared at me, and I took a step back. A pair of black wings had appeared on his back and I felt a shiver go down my spine. They were faint but still visible. Bowing to the two, I made my way out of their dorm. As I closed the door, I saw Germany falling onto the chair as Poland tried to soothe him.

Once I had left the dormitory building, I immediately headed to my office. Once there, I took a seat, laying my head on the table. My mind replayed the events and I felt my gut twist. *How can I reason with him?* I racked my brains, wondering what I could do. *Perhaps having physical evidence would be best.* A took out a small pyramid-shaped rock, a gift from my dear friend Egypt. It was a communication device she'd given me a long time ago back when we both studied in this school. Tracing the familiar patterns on the rock, I muttered an incantation. A soft golden glow emitted from the rock as it quivered. A sharp whine filled the room before fading away shortly after. A projection had appeared at the tip of the pyramid and it slowly filled my office. Before I knew it, it was as if I was back in the Kingdom of Sand's royal court.

I spotted Egypt sitting at her jewelled throne, looking down at me. She was dressed in a long sleeved white dress although the sleeves were sheer. Many jewels crowned her figure as court attendants fanned her. I bowed politely however I did not make any attempt to move. I was still in my office after all–the court was an elaborate illusion created by the device. When I'd asked Egypt about it the first time I used the device, she told me that she figured it was more interactive for her "guests" (as she put it).

Egypt's stern features gave way to a bright smile as she hopped down nimbly from her throne. Sashaying to me, she smiled coyly. As she leaned in close to me and I swore I could smell the sweet yet slightly musty perfume that she loved wearing.

"African Union, *habibti*, what brings you here?"

Translations:

habibti--My love

A/N: Repeating last chapter's first line, *Shouty Germany is really fun to write*. Anyways, have a little more information of Germany's time at the academy. I'll probably make African Union PoV chapter in a while or so but we'll see. I wonder what she and Egypt are gonna talk about...

I hope Egypt's description is good...

Anyways! Here's a picture of Japan in my normal style. I'm still trying to figure out China's style for BbD so I'll post that next chapter. Sorry for the wait!

[image]

It was kinda one of my rough sketches but I do like the eyes. Also, this was done in my new sketchbook!!! I'll show more of that in my artbook soon. I really like Japan's drawing though for this one cause of the hair although my bun drawing is kinda crappy.

Anyways, Question time!

1) What do y'all think about Germany's reaction?

2) Still about Germany, what do you think the flashes of purple in the shadows around him represent?

3) Who is another CH you want their headcanons on? This is for my HC CH book.

Alright that's all for today! Have a great week ahead and thank

you for reading!

(I'm already starting to think about what to do for when I hit 10K. Any ideas?)

With me

[image]

I slumped onto the armchair as soon as AU left, breathing heavily. A horrible pain was beginning to worm its way into my skull and I clutched my head, groaning. I wanted to just curl up in a darkened room and sleep. Poland rubbed circles on my back soothingly, humming. "Do you need me to get you anything?" his voice cut through the throbbing and it felt almost like a relief.

"Pai...painkillers please," I stuttered as the pain took another stab into my skull.

"Okay, one moment," he replied as his touch disappeared from my back. The throbbing seemed to increase as soon as he left and I almost regret asking him to go. *Almost.* There's a difference between regret and *almost* regretting. I think.

"Sure, keep deluding yourself," East snarked. Oh great, I didn't need him now. I was already having a bad enough headache as it was. "Quit torturing the boy East. Just focus on your breathing Germany," West's soothing voice seemed to help as I tried to focus on my breaths. Poland came back a while later, gently shaking me. "Here, eat this and drink the water," he told me, passing a pill and a cup.

I put the pill between my teeth before taking a swig of water to swallow it. I finished the rest of the cup and Poland took it, setting it down on the coffee table. He took a seat on the ground in front of me, head cocked to the side. "Do you think Singapore's going to come back soon?" he asked after a while, looking towards the front door. I shrugged, wincing.

"I wonder if he's okay...the news must be pretty shocking for him even if he's not royalty," Poland continued, looking to the side. I hummed softly, feeling the medication beginning to work. My eyelids were drooping and I stifled a yawn.

"He'll be fine," I said before adding, "At least I hope so." Poland sighed, looking at me, "Why didn't you want to accept AU's help? I thought you'd be happy knowing a teacher was on our side. Don't tell me..."

"I still want to go. I just don't trust her. What could she possibly help us with? Besides, she's a teacher and right now, they are *our* enemies. No, we're going to find our own way out of here," I said, coming off harsher than expected. Poland bit his cheek as his brows furrowed. However, he didn't say anything much to my relief. The last thing I needed was to get into an argument with him. I leaned back into the chair, slightly grateful for the medication's quick effects. The pain had dulled to a bearable point and I no longer felt like curling up in a dark room. My energy level was a different story however. I felt like I was about to crash. Poland noticed this and promptly told me to go rest.

"Go lay down in your bed," he insisted when I told him I just needed a quick nap on the chair, "You're probably going to conk out for a good hour or so. Come on, up!" He tugged on my hand and forced me to stand up. Reluctantly, I allowed myself to be led to my room. The sight of my bed seemed to spark another wave of tiredness from my body as I stifled another yawn. *I must be more tired than I thought...* Perhaps I spent more energy arguing with those teachers than I expected. *Tch, how dumb of me*.

Crawling into bed, I placed my glasses on the bedside table and pulled the covers over my body, yawning. I could almost hear the smile in Poland's voice as he told me, "Night Ger!" before leaving. I was so tired I didn't bother to correct him. Shutting my eyes, I could feel the tendrils of sleep tugging on my mind. My breathing evened out as I slowly drifted into Hypnos' world. The peace did not last very long however.

Screaming...fire burning...dead bodies... Oma laying on the ground, blood dripping down her forehead. Berlin laying limply next to her... And me...standing there...dumb and useless. "No...no..." I could only stutter as I watched the monster fly high above me, roaring. It looked at me, giving me a toothy grin as it came towards me. I tried to run. I really did but I couldn't. ***RUN! WHY DON'T–***

"GERMANY WAKE UP!" I jolted right up in my bed, feeling sweat run down my back. My heart thudded in my chest and it felt like my throat was closing up. The darkness seemed to wrap around my body and I felt a deep sense of fear. It was almost primal–the fear– as I screamed, "Help! Help me!", clawing at my throat.

"Calm down!" a familiar voice barked as someone tried to hold me down. I only screamed louder as I tried to twist myself out of their grasps. *DANGER! DANGER! DANGER!* "GERMANY STOP IT!" the voice was now panicked and I could feel the person's grip loosening on me, "IT'S JUST ME! POLAND!" A second later, there was a soft glow of light filling my room and I squinted, my thrashing stopping almost instantly.

"Po...Pol...Polen?" I rasped, my throat raw from all my yelling. He smiled awkwardly in an attempt to reassure me as he helped me up. "Do you need anything?" he asked. It was at this moment, I realised that the comforting glow was coming from his figure. "Er...n...no," I told him, slightly transfixed by the light. He nodded and the glow vanished from his figure, launching us into semi-darkness. I felt my breathing quicken but I tried to ignore it. I just needed to get used to... I shut my eyes but I could see the nightmare-ish landscape that haunted me not too long ago. My chest tightened–

Fwomp! My eyes shot open as I saw the room illuminated in a peaceful golden glow as Poland took a seat on my bed, a concerned look on his face. "Hey, just focus on me. Focus on the glow, Germany. You're safe here. You're not...you're not back there. You're here. In school. In your room," he comforted me, patting my shoulder. I took several shivering breaths as I shook uncontrollably.

"Do you want to talk about your dream?" Poland asked softly after a while. I shook my head and he nodded in understanding. "Okay. We won't touch on that for now then. How about we move out of here first? I'm not sure how much longer I can keep this glow up without becoming too hot," he said before his eyes widened. "Shit, I didn't mean it that way! I mean my body temperature!" he frantically said, the glow flickering. I couldn't help but laugh as his face turned redder and redder. "Hey! It's not funny! Stop...stop laughing!" he fought back, repressing a smile.

"You didn't actually see it as *that* right? Ah...screw Ame, I've gotten way too weird thanks to him," he sighed dramatically before standing up, offering his hand out to me. I took it and he pulled me up as we walked out into the living room. Sitting me down on the couch, he went to take a glass of water for me. I accepted it gratefully as I took a sip. He sat down next to me, fanning himself lazily. I saw a sheen of sweat coating his face and I could almost feel heat radiating off him. "Are you okay? I can feel the heat coming off you," I commented, frowning slightly. I didn't want him to fall sick again, especially not at the expense of helping me.

"Oh, is it making you uncomfortable or sick? I can move–"

"No! It's okay...nice...I didn't you could make your whole figure glow actually," I stared at him in curiosity. *I wonder...* "Okay...I know you had a really horrible time there but er...you're staring is creeping me out," he leaned away and I blinked, realising I'd be staring for a tad too long. "Sorry..." I muttered, looking away.

"Eh, it's fine. But if you're wondering, my instructor has been teaching me how to make my body glow. I don't know what he's on about honestly erm but...well it came in handy today I suppose," he looked at me, a smile tugging at his lips. I nodded, thanking him for his help.

"No problem, it's the least I can do," he grinned.

"How long did I sleep for?" I asked.

"Around 3 hours actually. Seems like you're more tired than you think you are," he told me, shrugging. I gave a squeak of surprise. That was a pretty long time for me to be out. Perhaps the day's events had tired me out more than expected.

We fell into a comfortable silence and I felt my body relax. Poland had gone back to reading a book and the flipping of pages filled our living room. Funnily enough, he was beginning to glow once more– only much softer. I half wondered if he was doing it on purpose. It felt almost hypnotising and I let out a sleepy yawn. Poland looked at me from the corner of his eyes as he cheekily commented, "Getting sleepy again?"

I struggled to pull myself out of my sluggishness as I shot back, "No! Of course not!"

"Hah, keep telling yourself that. You're practically dozing off at this point. Come on, wake up now, you're not gonna sleep tonight if you sleep now," he shook me gently as he helped me up, "Go wash up. Maybe that'll help you wake up properly. Then we can go get dinner with the others."

I nodded sleepily, taking some new clothes before heading to the toilet. Shutting the door behind me and locking it, I undressed and headed into the shower area. As soon as the water hit me, I perked up. I quickly washed up, feeling the sweat wash off me. The smell of lavender soap soothed me and I could feel my memory of the nightmare begin to fade. Despite it, I couldn't help but feel slightly uneasy still. *Forget about it, Germany. It's better not to remember these things*, I reminded myself.

I changed into a pair of loose navy blue trousers and a long sleeved polo shirt and dried my hair as much as I could before brushing out the knots. After that, I threw my dirty laundry into my respective basket before heading out. Poland had changed his attire as well and was now dressed in a pair of jeans and a brown sweater.

"Ready to go and cause some revolution?" he asked jokingly.

"Don't say it like that."

I think Poland pretended not to hear me. We made our way to the dining hall and once we entered, I could tell the environment had changed. The noise levels were a lot lower and there was this air of gloom hanging over the students. Fortunately there were no teachers around so our plan would probably run smoothly. At least I hoped so.

Poland and I headed over to the table where Japan and the others were at once we got our food. "Hey guys!" he cheerfully called out, setting down his food. America grinned as he gave me a nod of acknowledgement.

"Anything interesting happened?" he asked.

"AU visited us," I blurted out. The table went silent and South Korea dropped his chopstick. It clanked loudly on the ground and he flushed as he picked it up. He silently sat back down, still staring at me.

"What?!" Italy was the first to speak, "AU visited you?! Are we in trouble?!"

"Like–"

"No," Poland interrupted me. I shot him a look which he ignored. "She offered help. From an acquaintance," he continued. Murmurs went through the table as they took in the information. "I rejected her. It's not worth the risk," I said.

"You what?!" America snapped, "That was our sure ticket out! Why the heck would you reject her?!" I stared at him as I answered coldly, "She's a teacher. We can't trust her. She might be working with UN."

"That's you being overly cautious! Look–"

"Germany's fears are validated. We can't be sure that AU isn't conspiring with the others," Japan interjected calmly. The others except Canada and America nodded. America gritted his teeth as he continued to seeth at me. Canada had a conflicted look on his face but eventually he nodded as he whispered something to his twin. Whatever he said seemed to make America back down despite the dirty look he shot me.

"Whatever the case is, we should be able to continue with our plan right?" he asked. South Korea nodded as he piped in, "In fact, it's a good test for AU. If she's really bent on helping us, she'll probably try to shield us from UN's scoldings." I nodded slowly as the gears in my mind turned. He was right. AU couldn't be trusted but perhaps this might just prove where her loyalties lay. *Perhaps then I might reconsider*.

"Or it's all an elaborate set-up. Can you even trust these people?" East asked me. I gritted my teeth as I tried my best to ignore him. *He's wrong. He's wrong. He's wrong.* I repeated the mantra as I

gripped the bench tightly. *He's wrong.*

"Shall we start the announcement now?" Italy asked. Japan volunteered to go and I couldn't help but let out a soft sigh of relief. I didn't think I had the strength to speak at that moment. She tapped the spoon on her plate a few times until everyone was staring at us. My skin crawled as I pursed my lips. Surveying the room, I found Singapore sitting at the back of the canteen with his family. He had a stormy expression on his face and looked hostile. Russia and his siblings were closer to us and I could see Ukraine's confused expression. Kazakhstan looked around in confusion as Belarus looked to her brother. Russia caught my gaze as he lifted an eyebrow. *What's going on?*

I looked away and I swore the temperature dropped another few degrees. Looking about the room to make sure everyone's attention was on her, Japan began her speech. "I'm going to keep this short. We've all heard how the school is intending to keep us here. But is that what *you* really want? Do you really want to be sitting ducks while your homes and families are in danger?" she started off. Murmurs filled the hall as a few nodded. Encouraged by this, she continued, "What if we can change this? What if we can escape?"

"And how are you going to achieve that?" China called out from the back of the hall, "Escaping from here is not as easy as you believe it to be. Besides, the teachers have put this rule in place for our safety."

Japan glared daggers at him but didn't reply as she hurriedly added, "Here you'll be stuck wondering night and day if your family is safe but if you're out there, you'll always know. So who's with me?"

"Or your family could be dead and you could die too," China piped in unhelpfully. Japan's face turned red as she snarled when he walked closer, a small smirk on his face. "日本公主，你明白我的意思吗?" he asked in a foreign language I didn't understand. Japan however seemed to understand as she replied back stiltedly, "你闭嘴！"

The crowd seemed to become divided as some took China's side while others took ours. Funnily enough, Russia and his family

seemed undecided. It seemed like this was the first "big" decision they were making for themselves in a long time.

"China's right! We're safe here, what's the use going back to the kingdoms? Besides, the Light Kingdom will save us!" a girl said haughtily. Japan looked ready to scream and I decided it was best if I took over. However, America had already beat me to it. A cold glint in his eyes, he smiled sweetly as he asked , "So you're home isn't important? Your family isn't important?" Her eyes widened as she spluttered, "Of...of course they are! What the hell are you trying to say?!"

"Then that should convince you to follow us, no?"

Silence. America smirked haughtily as he announced, "This. This is truly how selfish people can be." The girl cringed as she ducked away. Murmurs travelled through the hall as he surveyed the students. No one dared to speak out as they looked at him warily. China shot us a satisfied smirk as if saying, "I win."

A sudden burst of competitiveness burned within me as I stood up. The hall went silent as everyone stared at me. "Enough! We don't need to be torn apart just because of our differing views. I'm sure our feelings are all the same. We're all scared. That's why we should work together. Look, I know most of you hate me for who my father was. I don't blame you. But please look past that for now. So many of you just think I'm a monster just because of the legacy I carry but it *isn't* true. I'm my own person! I have feelings and right now, I'm scared. I'm scared that I'm going to be the cause of another war, of ruining others lives. So please, just help me out here," I pleaded with them.

"So who's with us?"

Translations:

日本公主，你明白我的意思吗?-- Princess Japan, do you understand me?

你闭嘴!--Shut up!

A/N: *screaming in embarrassment resulting in more embarrassment creating more...(you get the idea)*

I hate this chapter so much 😩 😩 😩

Oh well...maybe it's my writers block coming in. I hope not...I need to write my final project for my Creative Writing class and that involves writing -_- And I need to draw things for it. ;-; My choice...which isn't the smartest one. I'm having art block. *cries in pain*

Ahem ahem. Anyways, we're moving into the final chapter of the first half of Act 2! And the final chapter will have an Ame and Russ fight yippee! Also, here's China *Idiotic_Toast*!

[image]

(Sorry his skin isn't coloured in. I got a bit lazy.)

This is his official design and here's some facts about our boy!

Facts:
— He's 19 years old.

—Likes to annoy a certain someone–America

—Flits about traditional and modern

—Prince of Silk (referred to as Qin Wang back home. The others butcher the pronunciation so he just goes with 'Prince')

—Make little imitations of things for "fun" < what do u think?! Of course he sells 'em >

—Shape-shifting ability

— He can get very loud when intoxicated. "NO I'M NOT !!!"--a drunk China

And another piece of artwork because I was bored. It's based off the photo Ger mentioned in one of the past chapters.

[image]

Erm...they took this when Germany was 4. So pretty much right before the war. If Germany looks weird, I'm sorry TnT BUT LOOK AT HIS SMILE! LOOK AT THE LIFE IN HIM!!!! HE'S JUST A HUSK NOWWWWWWWWWWW-- *coughs*

I don't have any questions for today but here's a funny thing I thought about for Germany. (Not really a headcanon since I see CH as separate gens of each other)

Countryhumans can remember when they were first born and the flag on their face just changes. Esentially, they are primidoral creatures who cannot die. They are gods. They remember EVERYTHING.

That's why Germany doesn't like looking in the mirror. When he looks in the mirror, he sees his past selves and he hates them. He hates TR the most. It's the reason why he refuses to have mirrors in his house.

Aight, that's all from me for today. I might not be posting following schedule since exam season is coming up. Also, I took a video of my best friend coming out of class with another friend and she basically pointed the middle finger at me. I still have the video. It's the funniest shit I've seen.

And thank you so much for helping me hit my goal of reaching 50 followers by 2024! :D Y'all are awesome. Thanks for the 55 followers!!!

See you! And if you have suggestions for improvement please put them here. Thank you :D

Escape

[image]

"I am," Finland told us, rising from his seat. One by one, more and more students stood up, determination shining on their faces. I smiled gratefully as Germany thanked them. "I won't let you down. I promise," he said. China scowled and I saw his body flicker a few times showing a battered young boy. I blinked again and he was back to normal. *Must be my imagination*.

There were a few cheers before a loud screech cut them off. I saw America scowl as Russia stood up, crossing his arms as he said, "I agree with China. Going out there isn't safe–"

"And how would you know that huh? Being Daddy's little good boy? By the time you even *try* to help he'll be dead. Ha–OUCH!" America clutched his face as Russia stared down on him, fury in his eyes. Ukraine and Kazakhstan looked on wide-eyed while Belarus simply continued to eat her food. "You will not speak of our Tsar like that!" Russia spat.

"Oh yea, he's not *my* king so I can *bloody hell* speak however the hell I want to!" America shouted back. The rest of us looked at each other as Canada wrung his hands nervously. Russia's eyes widened in rage as he muttered something before throwing a punch at America. America laughed as he kicked the Russian in the stomach in an attempt to escape. Before we knew it, the students were beginning to chant, "RUSSIA! RUSSIA! RUSSIA!" and "AMERICA! AMERICA! AMERICA!" Germany's eye twitched uncontrollably as the other two boys began to roll about the floor, fighting.

"We should stop them," I said, but continued to watch on entranced. Russia was pinning America down but got flipped over less than a minute later as America began punching him in the face. "You *сволочь*! I will make sure you pay for this!" Russia screamed.

"Hey! Chill dude, it's not my fault your father is a control freak!" America grinned as he kicked Russia in the chest before adding, "I

hope he's dead actually."

"Yea? I hope your stupid siblings die first!" Russia snapped, slamming him onto the ground. Canada's eyes widened as his face turned redder and redder as he took a step forward. I noticed Ukraine shaking her head furiously as she waved her hands at us. *Don't, Canada.* Italy placed a hand on him as he whispered something. Canada gritted his teeth but didn't make any further moves. Meanwhile, Germany looked on as the crowd continued to chant.

"We really need to stop them," South Korea piped in, "Like now."

"How?" Japan asked as she looked on, "Those two aren't going to listen to us."

"YOU TWO! JUST CALM DOWN! STOP FIGHTING PLEASE!" Germany screamed hoarsely. No one heard him. The crowd's screams drowned his voice out and he looked at us helplessly. *Help me*, he mouthed.

Suddenly, there was a surge of warmth and then a scream. Our eyes collectively widened as Canada muttered a not so nice word. "Oh no...okay, we *really* should stop them now," he said. "Way to state the obvious Nada," South Korea snarked before being slapped on the back by Italy. I grimaced as America's ability blazed. Russia was now at arms length away from America as he formed an ice shield to protect his face from being seared by the flames. China watched on, a frown on his face as he waved his fan to clear the smoke appearing.

"Canada, you take your brother. I'll take Russia," Germany said. We looked at him in confusion as he looked back at us. *What are you waiting for?* His expression seemed to read. Canada snapped out of his shock first as he nodded. They ran towards the two fighters as Canada lunged forward, grabbing America by the waist as they slammed onto the ground. Before America regained his senses, he was quickly dragged to the side as flowers encased his body. At the same time, Germany socked Russia in the jaw before dragging him to the side. Similar flowers wrapped around Russia's body although I noticed they were the thorny type. Realising the fight was over,

the students groaned and returned to whatever it was they were doing. China stared at me coldly as he flicked his fan shut. *This isn't over*, his gaze seemed to say. I felt a shiver go down my spine as I watched him melt into the crowd.

"LET ME GO!" America yelled as he struggled against his bonds. Ukraine walked towards him, flowers crowning her head. "Absolutely not. The last thing I need you to do is fight my stupid brother again," she crossed her arms.

"Then please let me go sister," Russia requested calmly as he slowly tried to freeze the floral bonds he was kept in. Somehow that sparked an idea in America as he tried to use his ability as well. Both failed. The bonds held strong and only a little bit of it was smoking. "What the hell?!" both spluttered. Ukraine smirked triumphantly in response, "No Russia. Same reason as America. And don't try to burn or freeze your way out of my grasp. My flowers are resistant to your abilities."

"I didn't even know she could do that," Italy whispered to me. I was about to say something when there was a bang. Our heads looked towards the source of the noise and I let out a strangled shriek when I realised who it was.
"Oh shit," South Korea muttered unhelpfully as we watched UN, INTERPOL and Nurse WHO walk in.

"Oh shit is an understatement. We should be saying oh f–"

"Now's not the time for yapping Italy!" I snapped as I forced him into a bow as they walked past us. UN had a disgruntled expression as he looked at Russia and America. Nurse WHO gritted her teeth as she hissed, "Who started the damn fight?"

(No prizes for guessing what the two said.)

"IT WAS HIM!"

UN sighed in exasperation as he requested for whoever tied the two up to release them. Ukraine clenched her fist and the flowers began to unravel as they disappeared into dust. Canada immediately held onto his brother and I noticed Germany grabbing onto Russia's

shoulders tightly. Nurse WHO quickly came over to take a look at the two. I noticed her starting with America first which wasn't a surprise. Compared to Russia, he hardly knew how to protect himself which was the main reason why he'd be the one always getting injured whenever the two fought.

"How did the fight occur?" UN asked tiredly. Germany looked like he was about to say something when a pitiful voice broke out from the crowd. "It's because America and his friends said they wanted to go out of the school to save their kingdoms! I told them not to, but they convinced the students. So Russia fought against him to–"

"That's bullshit!" Canada shrieked angrily at China who wore an expression of fear, "Absolute bullshit!"

"Language Canada," INTERPOL warned, "And if China's account is wrong, then what happened exactly?" Canada gaped as he struggled to reply. I mentally face palmed myself, cursing at him. One thing about Canada was that he couldn't lie to save his life at all. A student from the crowd stepped in as he confirmed what China said. I couldn't help but glare at him as the frown on UN's face deepened.

"Is this true Germany?" he asked.

"Yes," Germany replied coldly, "And if you have an issue with that, please direct it to Kaiserin Prussia."

INTERPOL's eye twitched as UN forced a smile onto his face. "Surely you understand why we can't let you–"

"I don't care! Your reasons are stupid and I'm not the only one who feels this way! Others do too! Today proves it!" Germany shot back, wiping the smile off our principal's face. I suppressed a snicker as I watched on. "Then that leaves me with no choice. INTERPOL, please," UN stepped to the side as INTERPOL stepped forward. Germany snarled and I swore I saw a pair of wings appear on his back. Shadows cloaked around him as a pair of yellow eyes circled his body. Nurse WHO's eyes widened as she began to stand up from where she was treating Russia.

Yellow eyes... I felt a violent shiver wrack my body and the next

thing I knew, I was on the ground. Italy was next to me, a worried look in his eyes. "Are you okay?" he asked, a hand on my back, "You just collapsed." I struggled to speak but managed to nod. Helping me to my feet, he grabbed my shoulder tightly.

"Stand down! That is an order!" INTERPOL ordered.

By now, murmurs were overtaking the dining hall as we watched on in anticipation. China attempted to say something but a surge of flowers bloomed in his mouth muffling his words. I watched Ukraine shoot me a look and I silently raised my hand upwards. *Thanks*. She cracked a small smile before turning away.

"No," Germany replied defiantly.

"Germany dear, please. I know this isn't the best option but really–" Nurse WHO was cut off as a large black shadow shot past her knocking her to the ground.

"SHUT UP! JUST SHUT THE HELL UP!" Germany screamed as a pair of large wings appeared. There were a few screams of terror as students backed away. I stared at them in a mix of awe and horror as UN raised a hand to stop Germany. I felt an oppressive power fall on me and my vision wavered. Japan was on the ground, wincing in pain as she curled into a ball.

When my vision cleared, I was surprised to see Germany still standing. UN gaped as INTERPOL raised her hand. A midnight blue veil fell upon Germany but as soon as it touched him, it disintegrated. "My people are suffering and I won't let you stop me from helping them!" he growled as the shadows swirled around him dangerously. His wings bristled as he glared furiously. A flash of purple appeared as his voice became distorted.

"Even if it means harming you."

The hall fell silent as soon as they heard his bold proclamation. UN closed his eyes and sighed. "Very well, you leave me with no choice. *En garde*!" he hollered as the doors to the dining hall slammed open. Several teachers rushed in as they headed our way. A few students screamed as their abilities came to life in a bid to protect

themselves. I saw America blaze to power as a teacher tried to douse his flames in water. From the corner of my eye, I spotted the ASEAN family huddling at the side as Thailand held onto Singapore who was struggling against his grasp.

A teacher ran towards me and he reached out just as I stepped out of the way. Italy wasn't so lucky and was slammed onto the ground. "Oof!" he grunted as the teacher attempted to grab his wrists to pin him down. Italy squirmed as he kneed the teacher a few times in the stomach. They rolled off to the side and I used the opportunity to run over to Germany who was fighting against INTERPOL. She was casting spell after spell but they simply deflected off him as he gathered the shadows as he sent them towards her. They continued to fight as I rushed over.

But before I could reach him, a foot tripped me. I fell to the ground with a thud and my vision wavered. Flipping me over, China scowled at me as he used his foot to step on my throat. "Screw you. I was going to play nice to you and the others but it seems like you have other plans," he sneered as he pressed down harder. I gasped for air as my vision began to tunnel. Clawing at his foot, I began to hyperventilate. China's face was not helping anything as my surroundings changed into the dungeons I was once kept in. "Useless. Just like *your father*," his voice had become distorted as I heard the familiar words repeated to me once again. China was no longer China. He had become–

"GET THE HELL AWAY FROM HIM!" I gasped, clutching at my throat as a large shadow shot past me and hit China in the face. He stumbled backwards before hitting his head on someone's elbow. He fell to the ground limply–knocked out cold. I looked at my saviour, a grateful look in my eyes. Germany panted as he ran over to me. INTERPOL was on the ground, out cold.

"Poland, are you okay?" he asked worriedly. I nodded, forcing a smile on my face. "Yea I am. Don't worry," I told him, glad that my voice held strong. However, I could still hear TR's horrible laughter in the back of my mind. Germany frowned at me but didn't make any other comments. "We should get the team together. At the rate things are going, we have a better chance going as a smaller group," he told me. I nodded and we attempted to make a move however

UN immediately stopped us.

"Okay, I tried to be nice but *clearly* it's not working," he looked at us with crazed eyes as his hand glowed blue. Germany and I shared a look as the same thought passed through our mind. *Duck.* With a roar, he slammed his hand onto the ground.

Or he would have. His hand stopped midway as the hall fell silent. His eyes and his mouth were wide open as he continued to glare at us. Around us, students and teachers were in various poses, some even stopped mid air. Germany and I however could still move and it seemed like we weren't the only ones. Italy, Japan, America and Canada were still able to move as well as they gathered around us.

"What the..." Japan stared, bewildered, "How..."

A cough. We spun around, surprised to see AU and ASEAN together. Germany's eyes narrowed as he bared his teeth. Beads of sweat dripped down ASEAN's face and he leaned heavily against AU. "What do you want?" America held a fireball in his hand, a dangerous look in his eyes.

"Now now, no need for hostility. We're here to help," AU held one hand upwards in a placating gesture.

"And how can we trust you?" he countered.

AU sighed as she motioned to the frozen people. "Who do you think did that?" ASEAN asked us wearily. I looked at him, noticing that his eye colour had changed. His eyes were no longer emerald green–instead they were gold, like the sun. "I don't believe it, it's you isn't it?" I whispered.

ASEAN nodded as he placed a hand on AU's shoulder as he murmured something. She nodded and gently set him on the ground. The rest of us stared in surprise, even Germany and America's spiteful looks had vanished.

"But...but how? What...how?" Germany asked, confused.

ASEAN let out a low chuckle before groaning. AU had a worried look on her face as she bent down to ask him something. He shook

his head before looking at us again. "Have you ever heard of time manipulation?" he asked quietly.

"Impossible, the ability vanished a century ago!" Japan interjected, "You can't possibly be...The last user had no children!"

ASEAN smiled wryly as his emerald eyes flashed gold. "Non biological children that is," he corrected her, "For the record, my adoptive father changed his name and later passed on this ability to me before he passed away." We gaped as the information sank into our minds.

AU coughed as she added, "We don't have much time left. ASEAN is *clearly* weakening with each moment that passes by so I'll make this fast. Firstly, kudos to you on your little stunt. Surprisingly that worked rather well. Secondly, you can't bring most of the students, Egy–my associate, doesn't have that many carriages. So, here's what you're going to do. 6 of you are going to choose 2 more people from the other 2 kingdoms–Silk and Winter that is–to follow you. Choose them quickly so ASEAN can unfreeze them."

Murmurs passed through our group as Canada raised his hand, "We choose Ukraine." ASEAN nodded as he lazily raised a hand. There was a shriek and a thud as Canada rushed over to the source of the sound. He emerged from the crowd a minute later with Ukraine. She looked around in shock as he promised that he'd explain everything later.

"Okay, that leaves you with the representative from Silk. Who will it be?" ASEAN asked.

No one replied as we looked at Japan for help. "What...what are you looking at me for?!" she spluttered, "Just because I'm from East Pangea doesn't mean I can choose for you!"

A sudden wrack of coughs broke the tension as AU barked, "Hey! Choose quickly will you? ASEAN is dying here!"

"I'm not *KUFF KUFF* dying *KUFF KUFF*," ASEAN said between coughs. Blood dripped from his lips, staining his clothing. "Yea, says the person coughing out blood!" she snapped back, worry clouding

her features. We looked at one another, unsure of who to choose. Finally after what seemed like forever, Germany raised a hand. "All in favour of Singapore?" he asked us.

"Who now?" America asked, frowning.

"Our roommate," I jumped in, "He's a good choice. I'm in favour."

Japan and Ukraine also nodded approvingly. Italy, America and Canada looked sceptical but slowly nodded. ASEAN frowned worriedly as he asked us if we were sure. "Yes, he's someone most of us know and he's responsible," I told him. He pursed his lips as he hesitantly raised his hand.

"Before I let you go, promise me you'll take care of him. Please," he pleaded.

Germany and I immediately nodded as we said, "I promise." ASEAN smiled as he closed his eyes. There was a gasp before a thud was heard. Singapore stumbled out gasping for air as he whipped his head around. "What the he–"

"Language Singa," ASEAN coughed. Singapore looked towards us, eyes wide. "Papa?" he ran over, mouth agape. America let out a cough prompting Singapore to stop, "Look, I'd love for you and your dad to have your reunion but now's not the time. We need to go!"

Singapore looked at us baffled and AU quickly explained what was going on. He bit his lip nervously but nodded. ASEAN had another coughing fit as more blood spilled from his lips. I noticed our surroundings shimmering as AU hurriedly told us, "America's right. Right now, the most important thing for you to do is get to the Palace of Sand. My associate will know once you are there."

"Wait, then what about you two?" I asked, "UN will kill you!"

ASEAN shook his head, coughing before answering, "Don't worry about us. Singa, stop giving me that look, I'll be fine. Look, I'm stronger than you think. I will erase their memories of this incident once this is over."

Erase their memories?! ASEAN looked ashamed as he murmured, "It's

not my favourite thing to do but it is for the best. You have to hurry now. My ability is not going to hold for much longer. Singa, come here for a second will you." Singapore kneeled next to his father as ASEAN wiped away the blood from his lips. Gently kissing his son's forehead, he murmured something. Looking back at us, he flushed but didn't say anything.

AU let out a soft scoff, a small smile on her face. When she looked at us however, her expression hardened. Passing Germany a pyramid shaped object, she instructed the rest of us to line up. "When the portal opens, run straight ahead. Don't look back," she warned us as the tip of the object began to burn a bright red. A second later, a portal made of swirling sand appeared. "RUN!" she screamed as Japan–the first person–started running. She didn't look back. Ukraine went next, then Italy, then Canada, then me. I ran as fast as I could and fell headfirst into the portal.

(In hindsight, it was not my smartest choice.)

I fell headfirst into a pile of sand as the portal spat me out. Someone dragged me away as I heard America screaming from behind me. Hacking out my lungs, I vomited out the sand I'd ingested as someone kept hitting my back. After a while, I'd finally managed to stop even though I swore I still could taste the sand in my mouth.

"Ughhhhh," I groaned as I slowly opened my eyes but slammed them shut after a particularly bright light filled my vision. Slowly opening my eyes again, I slowly allowed myself to get used to the brightness. Germany stood in front of me, his wings open as he shook them repeatedly. "You good?" a familiar voice asked me. I nodded to Ukraine as I slowly stood up. America looked worse for wear, his hair sticking up in odd directions as he leaned against his brother. "Never again," he announced as Canada stood there awkwardly.

"Where are we?" I asked as we slowly came together.

"Hello esteemed guests! Quick, come in, the outdoors is no place for you," I spun around, surprised to see a woman dressed in a long blue dress with sheer sleeves. She had a weird headband around her

forehead, a bird–perhaps an eagle–in the centre

"Who are you?" Germany asked warily as shadows wrapped around his figure.

The woman laughed as she smiled coyly, "Ah silly me, I forgot my introductions. I'm Queen Arab Republic of Egypt but please call me Egypt. I'm African Union's friend."

Translations:

сволочь-bastard

En garde- On guard

A/N: *Gong sound* We're officially into Part 2 of Act 2! I hope the Russia and America fight was good. And we have lovely Egypt at long last! I think I lied when I said I'm going to start posting irregularly. ;-;

OKAY! I HAVE MAYBE A LITTLE LESS THAN A MONTH LEFT ERRRRRRRRR *sweats nervously*

Anyways, I got bored so I made some stickers of of trio from BbD.

[image]

I would honestly low-key sell stuff if I could but like I think it's one of those 'san fen zhong re du' things. Who should I do next though if I do another one of these?

And now for Question time!

1) What are your thoughts on ASEAN?

2) Did Germany just channel his father into his body? Is that why his voice distorted?

For those who are curious about ASEAN's past and his ability,

here's a little about it.

ASEAN's adoptive father is ASA (Association for Southeast Asia) and ASA found ASEAN as a crying baby in a rice field in the Kingdom of Silk. He took care of ASEAN for many years up till his death, leaving ASEAN alone once again--aged 20. It was at this time, he passed on his ability to his son. ASEAN managed to stay low right until the war started. J.E found out about ASEAN who had been working as a teacher in the village and promptly captured him. As an time manipulator, ASEAN was one of the strongest ability users and this spelled trouble for J.E and his allies. As such, J.E, promising not to kill ASEAN, allowed him to work for the Kingdom of Dawn as long as he never used his ability. ASEAN agreed and would tutor J.E's son, ***Kiji Japan****.*

ASEAN stayed under J.E's "rule" for 3 years during this time, he saw what would later on be his children being captured. His heart ached and he finally decided to disobey J.E and used his ability to stop time and save the children. Kiji Japan was actually the main reason why he dared to even go ahead. He erased J.E's memories of his existence and even Kiji Japan's despite his initial protests. This is one of the few reasons why he doesn't like erasing people's memories.

*2 years after the war, UN found him and asked him to work as the Professor of Math in his academy noting ASEAN's incredible IQ. ASEAN agreed under the agreement that his children would be able to attend the school. (****He formally adopted them all 1/2 a year after the war ended****.) However, UN also made him agree that he would wear restrictors at all times so that he'd never use his ability.*

ASEAN, scared of what he'd done a while back, immediately agreed and a deal was struck. And he wore the restrictors--gold bracelets--up till this chapter when AU freed him.

He's pretty weak in his ability and it is also really draining which is why he coughed out blood.

And that's all for today. Good bye!

Eye of Horus

[image]

My eyes widened as I fumbled into a bow. Egypt laughed as she waved a hand, pulling me up. "No need for all those formalities. Come in, the heat is rather strong today," she motioned for us to follow her. We glanced at each other, silently conversing. After a moment, we nodded and began to trail behind her. We walked past palm trees and tall beige structures as Egypt led us into one of the buildings. There were a few guards who narrowed their eyes when they spotted us. I realised that they wore a helmet in the shape of a jackal. *Interesting.* Once they realised that we were with her, they relaxed and immediately bowed.

We walked through large halls, different carvings and statues lining the walls. I noticed that compared to the outside, it was much much cooler. The rest of the group looked around, amazed. I'd heard stories of the Kingdom of Sand from Berlin when I was younger. It was unlike the rest of the other kingdoms, having extremely different customs and traditions. Even their architecture was different, created out of compacted sand. Italy and Singapore began asking Egypt many questions to which she gladly answered. I felt a ghost of a smile on my lips as I watched the two. I looked towards Poland, surprised to see him staring at the ground.

"Hey, you good?" I asked, nudging him.

"Huh? What? Me? Yea, why wouldn't I?" he answered quickly. A little *too* quickly.

"China's actions didn't scare you?"

"Oh no...not really...I mean...I've had worse so...I'm...I'm good," he forced a smile as his walking speed increased. I frowned as I caught up with him. Something wasn't quite right with his demeanour. He was hiding something, I was sure of it. Just what though?

Don't push him. He's probably finally processing what just happened, I heard West tell me. Right...I shouldn't force him to tell me. He'd probably tell me in his own time if he really wanted to. I decided to distract myself by admiring the decorated walls. Before I knew it, we were already entering the throne room.

"Sorry for the long walk. Ugh, my father always liked keeping our throne room far from the guests, something about...security was it? Well, that's not important now. Come, take a seat on the mat. Cairo, fetch us some *Limoon* from the kitchen please," she called out to a short attendant as she sat on her throne. The attendant –Cairo– bowed deeply before leaving the room through a hidden side door. We took a seat on the mat and I noticed Singapore and Japan kneeling down as they sat on their calves. (I think the Eastern Pangeans call that pose *Seiza*.) Meanwhile, the rest of us sat relatively normally. Egypt's smile faded away as she motioned to the guards surrounding the room to leave. They immediately did, filing out of the room.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" gone was the cheerful woman, replaced by a concerned adult. I nodded firmly trying not to let my annoyance show as I said, "We–I have to do this. I can't just sit there and watch my kingdom burn." The others nodded, determination clear on their faces. Egypt sighed as she nodded. "Very well. I have prepared 2 carriages with two horses each. I presume everyone should know how to ride one?" she paused waiting for our response. Everyone nodded and she relaxed, "Ah, that's good to hear. Now where was I...oh yes, I also prepared some food packs for you and 2 maps which show you the fastest and safest route to the Kingdom of Darkness. There's also some clothing and cloaks in the bags. I gave you all a weapon from your kingdom for protection, " Egypt told us as Cairo came back with a tray of drinks.

"Thank you," I accepted the cold drink from him gratefully as I took a sip. It was a little sour but overall refreshing. I felt a slight pinching sensation in my back as I continued to take sips but ignored it. It was probably my wings disappearing–in that case it would be good. (Do you know how annoying wings are when you hardly use them?) Egypt took one from Cairo as she thanked him. He bowed before leaving the room. The throne room fell into

silence as we drank our drinks. I placed my finished drink down on the mat as I politely asked her, "Do you have any other advice for us?"

Egypt set down her drink as she pursed her lips. "Not much I'm afraid. However, I can promise you one thing. That is, up until you leave this kingdom, you should be safe. Up till now, the Kingdom of Sand has not been attacked by Apophis–the name the monster has been given–rather fitting if you ask me," she muttered.

"Wait...isn't Apophis the snake god thingy?" Italy asked, frowning.

The room seemed to darken as Egypt's eyes sharpened as she tersely answered, "Apophis is not is not a *thingy*. Apophis is a *god*–a powerful one that is–one who brings darkness and disorder to *Maat*. Do not use the name lightly."

"Our apologies, he doesn't think before he speaks," I apologised, slapping a hand onto Italy's mouth. He glared at me but I ignored him. One more thing about the Kingdom of Sand that made it unique from the other kingdoms was that they had a religion starting from the kingdom's founding. Many of the kingdom's occupants held on to certain beliefs such as uttering the names of the gods was something not to be taken lightly as it was believed you could invoke the gods' powers just through saying their name. It wasn't a surprise that Italy's actions had disturbed Egypt.

"Don't worry. Next time, be careful with your words Prince Italy," she warned him. Prying my hand off his mouth, Italy nodded, bowing halfway. "My deepest apologies for my ignorance, Queen Egypt," he apologised. She relaxed, an approving smile on her face.

"Night is setting in soon so you can leave then. The land is cooler so it'll be easier for you to travel," she told us, looking at her wrist, "It'll be another 20 minutes so we can get going now. The entrance is rather far from here. Aswan!" A guard entered the throne room, bowing deeply.

"Yes my queen?" he asked.

"Guide our guests to the entrance please. Prince Germany a word if

you will," she smiled at me although I noticed they didn't reach her eyes. *Insincere*, East's voice reverberated in my mind. I felt my stomach roll as I nodded meekly. Japan's eyes met mine as she stood up. I nodded slightly, forcing a half smile onto my face. *I'll catch up later*. She hesitated but soon followed after the others as they exited the room. Egypt stood up, motioning for me to do the same.

"Come," she said, gently grabbing my arm. We exited through one of the hidden doors and I found myself on a balcony. The sky was beginning to darken and a cool breeze brushed past me. Egypt leaned against the railing as she stared up into the sky. I stared down at the scenery, enthralled by it. You could see the nearby city, lights illuminating it. You could hear the faint sound of the people talking. *They sound happy*. Somehow, a wave of protection surged through me.

"Beautiful isn't it?" Egypt asked me softly, "It's one of my favourite places to come to when I need to relax. Just looking at my citizens having fun. Reminds me of what I want to protect. Their happiness." I nodded before asking, "Why did you bring me here?" She sighed again as she looked at me. "Germany...Prince Germany, how much about your father's deeds do you know about?" she asked.

My eyes narrowed as I replied tersely, "Why do you ask?"

Her lips twitched slightly as she took out a long cylinder from her pocket. Handing it over to me, she murmured, "Have you ever heard of the New Beginnings Cult?" I shook my head, confused as to what she was talking about.

Another sigh. This one sounded almost exasperated although I couldn't be entirely sure. Egypt motioned for me to open the cylinder and I did. A scroll fell out which I managed to catch in time. "I do not know if you are aware but towards the end of the investigations into the war crimes committed by your...father and his...allies, we found this piece of paper in his office," she continued. I unravelled the scroll, surprised to find my father's loopy scrawl on it. My breath caught in my throat as my hands shook.

"The scroll seems to talk about Apophis and...the New Beginnings Cult. It was a diary entry we found in his drawer and it seems to suggest that he...he was a part of this cult. Because of that, it started a whole slew of investigations lasting 2 years. Investigators wanted to find out if that was the cause for the monster ravaging our lands but were never able to fully establish it. He'd gotten rid of most of the evidence before his death. Even when I tried to push for investigations, Tsar Soviet and the others rejected it. 'They need time to recover,' was what King Britain told me. So I agreed. But it seems like this might just–"

"*Es wird weiter gedeihen, das schwöre ich bei meinem herzen*," I interrupted her breathlessly, heart racing as my head spun.

"What?" she frowned at me as I repeated the words only this time I repeated it in English.

"It will continue to thrive, I swear on my heart," I said, "That's the last line."

"Wait, give it to me please," I passed her the scroll and she read through it before asking, "Where did you find this? I don't see it."

I pointed to the messy scrawling at the bottom as my voice shook, "He couldn't have known..."

"Unless someone's doing the dirty work for his sorry ass," Egypt spat before softening, "Sorry, I didn't mean...well..."

"It's fine," I interrupted her before asking, "But who? The last I checked, most of his soldiers were imprisoned or executed. The ones living in the outskirts are too insane to possibly even revive a cult...right?"

Egypt hummed as she rolled the scroll back up. "Insanity does many things to a person," she said after a while and I couldn't help but notice the sadness in her eyes, however it disappeared as she asked, "How did you even know what that damn scrawl means? None of us–not even Kaiserin Prussia–knew what he'd written."

I shrugged as I replied, "I guess I just read more of his stuff before."

She nodded before frowning again. The silence between us was deafening and I shifted from foot to foot, unsure of what I was supposed to do. Suddenly, Egypt muttered, "CanIaskyousomething?"

"Huh?"

"Can. I. Ask. You. Something?" Egypt enunciated each word slowly, staring out at the city.

I nodded and she continued, "Have you ever had...I don't know...strange thoughts? About...war and conquering?" My eyes narrowed as I answered, "No. I haven't. And if you are suggesting–"

"No! Of course not! I would never," Egypt snarled before relaxing, "Apologies for my behaviour. But no. I didn't mean to suggest any of that." My lips twitched but I decided to trust her. If AU could...that means I could right?

"It's...it's fine. Why did you ask though?" I asked, crossing my arms, curiosity piqued. Egypt smiled and shook her head. "It's nothing. I just...you can say curious I suppose. That's all," she told me. Something about the sentence nagged at me but I couldn't place a finger on it. *Forget it. You're just tired*. Egypt took my hand, breaking my train of thought. "الله يحفظك ويوصلك هناك بالسلامة" she told me in a foreign language, "Best of luck on your journey."

"Thank you," I bowed and she patted my back. "I also called you out to give you this," from her pockets, she took out a silver-coloured necklace with a singular eye hanging from it, "The Eye of Horus, the god of kingship, healing, protection, the sun, and the sky. It's like a...a...good luck charm." She helped me wear the necklace, snapping the clasp shut. I thanked her as I tucked it under my shirt although slightly puzzled why it was only me who got the amulet.

As if hearing my thoughts, Egypt replied, "You may not realise it yet but you hold immeasurable power. That alone requires protection from the evil forces." *Me? Immeasurable power?* I opened my mouth to question her but Egypt cut me off before I could even begin. "Come now, we should go. Don't want to keep your friends waiting," she told me, opening the door back to the throne room.

"Oh by the way, I forgot to mention, that amulet allows you a maximum one time usage of a safe space. Use it wisely," she told me, "Now come along."

*

By the time we reached the entrance, it was fully dark. The moonlight glinted off the exposed piece of chain and I suddenly felt very self conscious. Could my fri– teammates see it? Apparently not. Italy waved to me excitedly as soon as he spotted me. America was leaning on one of the carriages which I noticed was decorated with many *ankhs*, one of the symbols I knew that represented protection (amongst other meanings) as well as some other symbols. The others were scattered around the place.

"Everyone ready to go?" I asked, trying my best to hide the nervousness in my voice. They nodded and Canada added, "If you're okay with it, Singapore, you, Poland and...America are in one carriage and the rest of us are in the other." I agreed although I noticed America's unhappy frown. *Forced into it huh?*

After a quick check of our supplies and the horses, we hopped on. Canada and Poland both offered to drive first and I gladly agreed. Despite how well I was holding up, I was still very tired. Egypt bid us farewell and the guard–Aswan–saluted.

"Good luck," she told us.

"Thank you Queen Egypt. For everything," I bowed before entering into the carriage. She smiled and motioned to Canada and Poland to start driving. Once we passed through the tall gates that border the palace, I knew that only danger awaited us. Our one safe space was gone now.

God I hope everything goes well.

Translations:
Es wird weiter gedeihen, das schwöre ich bei meinem herzen--It will continue to thrive, I swear on my heart

الله يحفظك ويوصلك هناك بالسلامة--May God keep you safe and reach

there safely

A/N: I researched on Ancient Egyptian culture for this chapter lmao. (Not extensively so I might have gotten things wrong) It's pretty interesting and I also got to learn a little bit more about their gods. (I think I'm also just doing it cause I'm reading the Kane Chronicals based off the Egyptian Myths soooo...)

Anyways, what did Egypt mean by immeasurable power??? AND A CULT?! Just what the hell is happening?!

Welp, all will be revealed in due time so you'll just have to wait a little while longer.

As for AU's little pyramid thingy? Yea, Ger still has it. And speaking of Ger, his wings are gone for now lol.

Now for some art!

[image]

(I really hate how the photo quality sometimes becomes super shit once published) **I love Egypt's design the best :D AU's headwrap was a real headache cause I'm not used to drawing headwraps soooooo...at least it looks not too bad. ASEAN looks a lil too young. And now some facts about our three lovely adults.**

EGYPT:
–Ageless

–Wears modest clothing with sheer sleeves and lots of flashy jewels

–Often is mistaken to be weak

–Has the ability to summon the undead

–Mummy wraps around her wrist as a way for her to connect with her ability faster.

– She has a dual ability (rare) because she is a ruler. Once a year, she can call on what is dubbed as "Power of the Divine" to tell the future.

ASEAN:
—Professor of Mathematics

—Likes puzzles and riddles

—Very tired thanks to his chaotic children "INDONESIA! STOP FIGHTING WITH MYANMAR!"

—Coffee lover; addict "I AM NOT!"

—"Unlike my colleague EU, I don't tire my eyes. I wear glasses."

—Green, emerald eyes

—Has the ability to manipulate time. He can also erase memories. His eyes turn gold when power is in use. This was passed from his adoptive father ASA.

— Heavily restricted ability. As a result, UN had placed him under restrictors which he dutifully wore up till Germany and Co. fought against the school. AU was the one who freed him.

—Only Professor/teacher in the team to have children

—Kingdom of Silk

AU:
–Professor of Geography

–Likes to pop quiz the students

–Has a pet lion at home. Yikes.

–Plant manipulator

—Kingdom of Sand

And now some other drawings. I've been trying out with ballpoint pen (I did everything including sketch in pen) and so far it's not the worst thing I've done actually! Creds to Pinterest for some of the poses and drawings.

[image]

[image]

The one that says "I'M NOT GAY ARTEMIS!" is actually one of my old OCs (I had a whole story about them I never finished. In my defence I was 12.) and I've been wanting to draw him for a while. His name is Nova. Lemme know if you ever wanna read that story. I handwrote it though so...

Alrighty! Now, I'm tired of Question time (Nah, I just ran out of questions) so I'm passing this over to YOU! THE READERRRRR--

Ask me your questions here and I'll answer them as best as I can. Okie, bye y'all!

Can I Trust You?

[image]

"Who wants to drive first?" Canada asked. I quickly volunteered, not wanting to be stuck in the carriage with Germany. It wasn't a case of me not wanting to be close with him–I mean it was somewhat– but I really needed some space to think. Driving the carriage, alone, was the only solution I could see.

Everyone agreed and Canada also volunteered to take the first shift. "We'll change every...4 hours if that's okay with everyone?" he told us, "It's a long time I know so if you aren't okay with it, we can maybe shorten it to 2."

"Nah, I'm fine with it."

"Same here."

"Mmm."

Canada broke into a relieved smile as he thanked us as he graciously offered to lead our entourage. We had a final check of our supplies, wore our cloaks, before loading everyone onto the carriage. I couldn't help but notice a glint of silver around Germany's neck as he entered the carriage. *I wonder what it is. He didn't have it before.* A quick lighting off the lamps on both sides of the carriages, a holler from the guards and we were off. "GOOD LUCK!" she yelled, waving crazily, "STAY SAFE KIDS!" I couldn't help but smile as I silently thanked her.

We exited the gates of the palace, our carriages side by side and I couldn't help but feel an ominous weight crushing me. It finally occurred to me that we were officially out of our sanctuary and now we would only face increasingly risky perils as we continued on our journey. I couldn't help but feel a sense of excitement and trepidation. For once I was actually having an adventure, something I've always wanted (hence why I often ran away from the palace much to Warsaw's annoyance) yet the stakes were extremely high.

What happens if we fail?

"No, shut up, we won't!" I snapped, shaking my head.

"Everything alright?" Canada asked, worry evident in his voice even as he continued to focus on the road, "I heard a yelp."

"Uh... yea yea, everything's fine!" I stuttered.

Judging by the lack of a response, I assume he'd decided to drop the matter. I sighed, slumping in my seat as I looked up at the night sky. *Clip clop! Clip clop!* I found my mind reviewing the day's events and I felt my chest tighten. *This was the right choice right? Maybe we should have listened to UN...but if we did we...*

"Hey, stop worrying okay? We'll be fine," Canada's soft voice interjected my thoughts. I looked at him slightly astonished. How had he known...surely I couldn't have been that nervous right? As if hearing my thoughts, he answered, "You've been muttering things to yourself for the past few minutes."

"Oh."

"Do you want to talk it out?" he asked and I could hear a hint of desperation in his voice. Just a hint–perhaps it was my imagination. I shook my head but still found myself whispering, "Germany–he..."

"Did something happen?" a protective edge had come to Canada's usually calm and collected voice and I saw him shooting my carriage a questioning look. "No, of course not. It's just...I don't know, I...I just have this bad feeling. I mean I could be just still in shock I suppose. He's good and like I don't think...I don't...he...he's okay I thin–I mean—I'm sure?" I began rambling as my thoughts got more muddled.

Canada remained silent as he continued to hear me ramble on about...I don't even know what I was rambling about to be honest. All I knew at that moment was that I needed someone to hear me out. When I finally stopped, there was silence between us and all I could hear was my heart pounding. Canada stared straight ahead, making me wonder if he'd heard anything I'd said afterall. Just as I

was about to spiral down another road of worry, he spoke up.

"His wings– They...reminded you of...*him* didn't they? That's why you're scared," Canada's voice was quiet as he said the words I'd been dreading to say. I didn't know how to reply despite what he said being completely true. Canada let out a soft sigh as he continued, "It's fine to be scared Poland. I would be too. But..." He trailed off, pausing as if in contemplation. I waited, curious what he wanted to tell me.

"You haven't fully forgiven him have you?" he asked instead.

I paused, weighing my words carefully. "I...I'm not...I'm not sure. I mean I've forgiven him mostly but maybe... Well I suppose I still am holding onto some grudges," I admitted. Canada nodded as he simply stated, "I don't know how I can help you but I think you should talk out with Germany. I don't believe he has ill intentions but something about his aura doesn't sit right with me. The way he acted back at the academy just...there's something not right about it. Of course take the last bit of what I said with a pinch of salt, it's just my own opinion that's all." He added the last bit hurriedly.

I nodded and thanked him for his advice. "Anytime," he answered. I mulled over his words, wondering if there was a ring of truth to them. Inevitably, I fell down the rabbit hole of horrors as my mind recalled the past.

*

My father knelt down on the ground and I could only stare in shock and fear at the blade of the sword pointed at his neck. A stream of blood ran down his forehead, staining his pristine white uniform crimson. TR grinned manically as he let out a laugh. The wings on his back shook, a few black feathers dropping to the ground. It grated against my ears and I clutched them, trying to drown out his laughter. Around us, castle guards and staff looked on, eyes wide. My attendant, Warmian held onto me tightly as he whispered soothing words to me.

They meant nothing to me.

*" **Nie jesteśmy już tak potężni, prawda?** " TR sneered devilishly, his*

*accent prominent as he continued, " **Gdzie są twoi sojusznicy, kiedy ich potrzebujesz? No dalej, powiedz to. Nie wstydź się.** "*

My father looked at the ground, ashamed as he choked out, "S...str..."

*" **Idź teraz. Nie ma się czego wstydzić,** " TR's grin only widened as he egged my father on.*

*" **Oni... oni... oni odeszli** ..." my father said, hanging his head low. They are gone, was what he said. I could hear the pain in his voice and several gasps were heard as weapons dropped from their holders' hands.*

*" **Hast du das gehört? SEINE VERBÜNDETEN! SEINE SO GENANNTEN VERBÜNDETEN SIND WEG!** " TR roared in a language I could not comprehend. It sounded harsh and scary and that was all I knew. His soldiers surrounding us let out a roar of laughter and I glared at all of them. How could they be like this? Did they actually trust this insane person?*

Behind me, Warmian's hands shook as his grip on me loosened. "How...how..." he whispered, voice incredulous. TR chuckled darkly as he barked another few more orders. Two soldiers advanced towards me as my father was hauled to his feet by TR. The soldiers behind us grabbed me and Warmian, pulling us apart. "HEY! HEY! LET ME GO WITH HIM!" Warmian protested in a heavily accented voice. The soldier immediately grabbed his knife, driving it through my attendant's neck. Warmian screamed before going limp and I could only watch in horror as the soldier licked the blade clean. "Too noisy. You won't be noisy will you boy?" he knelt to my height, a smile on his face.

"LEAVE HIM ALONE!" my father screamed before letting out a muffled cry of pain.

"Oh shut up won't you," TR snarled, kicking my father in the stomach. My father vomited blood and TR rolled his eyes, "Weakling. And I presume your son is also one. Perhaps he's more fragile. After all...a little child like him...SOLDIERS BRING HIM HERE! I WANT TO TRY SOMETHING!"

"You...you are disgusting! Isn't he the same age as your son? Would you dare harm someone your son's age?" my father spat as the soldiers

dragged me.

Squelch! *My father groaned as TR sunk the knife's blade into his arm before turning his attention to me. His gaze was calculative and his feathers ruffled as he bent down to my height. "Would you like to join my family?" he asked.*

I didn't know how to respond but found myself shaking my head furiously. TR sighed dramatically as he rose, a dark look in his eyes. "Wrong answer," I heard him say before something hard hit my head and I passed out.

*

"It's time to switch," Canada announced, breaking me out of my reverie, pulling the reins on his horses. I shook my head, trying to dispel the dark thoughts as I followed him, hopping off my seat. We were in the middle of god knows where. He tasked me to grab some food for the horses as he went to rouse our teammates. I took four carrots and quickly went to feed our equestrian companions. They let out a soft neigh, happily chomping on their snack. I patted their manes, admiring their smoothness. Egypt sure knew how to care for their horses. *Good horses.*

"Goddamnit where are we Nada?" America's loud voice broke the tranquillity of the desert.

"Desert. Now, which of you guys want to drive the carriage?" Canada asked. I walked back towards the group, my eyes meeting Germany's. Even in the dim lighting, I could see his exhaustion and the rumpled clothing he wore added to that air of tiredness.

"I'll drive," Singapore answered, rubbing his eyes, stretching. Canada thanked him before looking at his group. "I'll drive as well," Japan offered. I noticed Singapore's eye twitching slightly and his pursed lips. *Interesting...* My knowledge about ASEAN's children with the Kingdom of Dawn was limited but I knew that they'd been tortured a hell lot during their time under J.E. *Perhaps some animosity still lies between them.*

"That's settled then. Poland and I will get some rest now. Thanks

Singapore and Japan," Canada flashed a grateful smile. We piled back into the carriages and continued on our journey. I sat next to Germany leaning my head on the wall. America sat opposite Germany, yawning. I shut my eyes, too tired to even have a basic conversation with the two. I heard a rustle of fabric and then silence aside from the clip clop of the horses' hooves. It lulled me to dreamland and soon, I slipped into unconsciousness.

*

I was awoken by the cold splash of water as two soldiers dragged my body off the bed. I struggled in their grasps but an iron backhand slap stopped me. I bit my lip, trying to hold my tears in as they brought me back to the Torture Chamber. TR was there, a maniacal grin on his face as he made my father lick his shoes. I felt my body fill with anger as it shook.

Papa's once neat and pristine hair was shaved till it was almost nothing and he wore rags–nothing like he'd once worn. His face was coated in grime and he had multiple bruises all over his body. When he spotted me however, he immediately rose, glaring at TR. TR looked confused for a moment but turned to look in my direction. His lips parted as a glint entered his eyes.

"Interesting..." he rumbled, nodding.

"Leave him alone!" Papa yelled, "He didn't do anything!"

***CRACK!** My father winced as TR whipped his leg. Blood oozed from the wound and the chamber filled with a nauseating iron smell. He sauntered over to me, kneeling down as he pinched my cheek. A gruff order to his soldiers and they released me before leaving. "Are you sure you don't want to join my family? My son could use a playmate," his voice was sweet and warm as a "genuine" smile formed on his face. My body trembled as I stuttered, "N...N...no! I stay with Papa!"*

*" **Polska nie!** " my father yelled before being slapped and yanked by the shirt. TR kicked him a few times, each kick punctuated by his words, "Shut up!" I clutched my ears, shutting my eyes, not knowing what else to do. All of a sudden, I heard a soft lullaby playing in my ears.*

~

"Schlaf ein, schlaf ein, schlaf ein

Du gähnst schon, komm, kuschel dich ein

Ich sing dir noch ein Lied

Ich freu mich so, dass es dich gibt

Ich wünsch dir eine gute Nacht

Wir sehen uns, wenn wieder die Sonne lacht

Schlaf ein, schlaf ein, schlaf ein

Wir lieben dich, schlaf jetzt ein

Wir lieben dich, schlaf jetzt ein

Schlaf ein, schlaf ein, schlaf ein..."

~

"Huh?" my eyelids opened lazily as sunlight streamed in from the window, "What..."

"Slept well?" Germany asked, gazing out of the window.

"Erm...ye...yes," I answered. I saw his eyes darken but he didn't say anything. "Where are we?" I asked, changing the topic. "Desert still, America took the next shift. Singapore's sleeping now. It's 7am," he pointed to our roommate, curled up in the corner, hugging his cloak tightly. He looked a lot younger asleep and I almost felt sorry for calling him on to do such a dangerous mission.

"How long have you been awake for?" I whispered, not wanting to wake up Singapore. He smiled sheepishly as he replied, "Since America left to take over driving. So since...3am I suppose?" I nodded, leaning back in my seat. Germany continued to stare out of the window, a peaceful expression on his face and I found myself recalling Canada's words. *The way he acted back at the academy*

just...there's something not right about it. I wanted to ask the German so many questions and yet I had no idea where to start. "Can I trust you?" I blurted out after a long while.

He looked at me, the sunlight glinting off his glasses. "What?" he asked in confusion.

I looked away shaking my head, muttering out a never mind, scared to pursue the question. "Why did you ask if you can trust me?" there was a guarded edge to his voice and I felt shivers go down my spine, "Do you not trust me?" That seemed to break the spell on me and I hurriedly shook my head, turning to face him. "No of course not! I just...can I...Can I trust you?" I repeated my question again. Germany sighed as he looked at the ground, contemplative. "Yes, you can trust me. I'm not like my father or grandfather," he answered, turning to face me, voice firm but quiet.

"Then earlier...at the school...those wings–"

"What about them?" his tone had become sharp as he avoided my gaze.

"They...Canada said they gave him a bad vibe and...I just, I'm not...how do I explain this," I muttered to myself. Germany remained silent, playing with his fingers. "And I just...I...they reminded me of y'know who–which is to say...erm..." I stuttered, silently regretting my decision to bring up this topic.

"A bad vibe, huh?" Germany shifted, leaning back on his seat. I shifted nervously, nodding meekly. He sighed, shutting his eyes. We stayed like this for a good few minutes and I busied myself by observing Singapore who had somehow managed to curl up into a foetal position, hugging his cloak like it was a baby. He mumbled something, brows furrowing as he curled up tighter.

"I'm sorry," Germany's voice jolted me out of my thoughts.

"Whatever for?"

"The wings. I...I don't really know how to comfort you about this...I guess I can't really stop you or the others from viewing them

negatively. I mean I'm not a fan of them either and I get where you're coming from so...don't worry about y'know whatever you're feeling I guess. I just...just know that I'm nothing like that bastard and I hope you can trust me on that," Germany finished, looking down.

I observed him, wondering if I was supposed to reply. What if I said something and things became worse? Before I could say anything else, the carriage jerked to a stop. Singapore fell to the ground with a thud and his eyes shot open as he groaned in pain. Germany and I quickly helped him up as he rubbed his head. "What the hell?" Singapore winced as Germany took a peek out of the window. When he looked back, his face was pale.

"HEY! LET US THROUGH!" I heard America yell and I shot a questioning look at Germany who was trembling.

"What's going on?" Singapore demanded as he let out a shaky breath.

"It's the Tulie Occult," he muttered, eyes wide in fear, "What the hell are they doing here?"

Translations:

Nie jesteśmy już tak potężni, prawda?--Not so powerful now, are we?

Gdzie są twoi sojusznicy, kiedy ich potrzebujesz? No dalej, powiedz to. Nie wstydź się.--Where are your allies when you need them? Come on, say it. Don't be shy.

Idź teraz. Nie ma się czego wstydzić--Go now. There's nothing to be ashamed of.

Oni... oni... oni odeszli...--They... they... they are gone...

Hast du das gehört? SEINE VERBÜNDETEN! SEINE SO GENANNTEN VERBÜNDETEN SIND WEG!--Did you hear that? HIS ALLIES! HIS SO-CALLED ALLIES ARE GONE!

Polska nie!--Poland no!

A/N: Hello humans. I'm officially back from the depths of the unknown ocean called End of Year Examinations aka EoYs. Oh and I'm getting some of my results back tomorrow

How's life been for y'all? I hope it's been good. I feel empty without my exams-- *screams of disbelief*

How do you like Poland diving into his (not really) existential crisis? I am also having the somewhat existential crisis after watching *Life Lessons with Uramichi Oniisan* ✧

I'm half kidding. I think.

***claps hands* Anyhoo, hopefully this chapter was okay considering I do feel a little rusty after not really writing for a long time. I'll try to keep up with updates since I'm free at last! I'm actually curious though if you would like to read some of my writing from when I was younger. I found them in my old computer recently lol. Lemme know!**

Oh one more thing, Warmian is half of a "state/province" in Poland. The full name is: *Warmian-Masurian Voivodeship* and I just split the names up so Masurian would be Warmian's wife and that province is technically their child. (Said Eli because she didn't want to write the full name so many times.)

***coughs* QUESTION TIME!!! (ft. Singapore)**

1) What do you think Singa was dreaming about?

2) Why does Singa curl up like a fried shrimp when he sleeps?

3) Why does he hug his cloak so tightly (hintnothint: he hugs a plush toy to sleep)

I want to write a whole book on Singapore or the ASEAN family because in my heart they secretly are my babies compared to Poland and Germany. *laughs nervously as I see Poland

holding a battle axe* BRB!

(One fight later)

I'm back! *bandages fall out of my non-existent pockets* But yes, I truly love the ASEAN CHs so perhaps my 3rd book might be something on them. Oh, I'm already writing the 2nd book (Mystery genre) lol. Still need to decide a cover. Let me know if you have any ideas on what I can do!

Alrighty, bye guys! (I've learnt that I suck at joke making. Please also let me know if my jokes suck thank you!)

Murderer

[image]

I took a glance out of the window, curious as to what was going on. What I saw sent a violent shiver down my spine. There was a group of hooded people and some were carrying weapons. On their cloak was a large and familiar emblem and I let out a strangled gasp as I ducked back into the carriage. *No. No. No. No. What the hell?! What is the Tulie Occult doing here?*

The Tulie Occult was a cult that roamed the Kingdom of Darkness since my grandfather's ruling days. They'd gained insane "popularity" when they joined my father (something I found out only much later on) and the New Beginnings Cult during the war. The occult was known to be strange in their methods of recruitment and modes of operation. That being said, they were not to be taken lightly for their members were considered mentally insane and dangerous. God knew what lengths they'd go to in order to "protect" their group's mission. Official reports stated that they'd killed thousands of people who disagreed with my father's ruling methods but it was never fully confirmed with many people thinking they'd killed at least a million under my father's orders. *I thought they broke up after the war!*

"What's going on Germany?" Singapore asked, jerking me out of my thoughts.

"It's the Tulie Occult...what the hell are they doing here?" I murmured, shaking.

"Who now?" Singapore questioned, raising his eyebrow. Poland stared at him, eyes as wide as saucers, repeating what he'd said in an incredulous voice. Singapore shrugged as he replied, "Never heard of them. At least not where I'm from." Poland and I stared in shock as he flushed red.

Suddenly, I heard someone demand for me. "I know he's with you! I can feel his presence!" a male voice yelled. "What? You've got to be

kidding me," America's (over) confident voice rang clear and loud, "Come on nut job, why don't you quit this circus show and let me and my buddy here through?" Poland winced, shaking his head. *This is not gonna end well,* his body language seemed to convey.

"I'm going out, stay put," I told them, standing up. Poland grabbed my hand, shaking his head. "That's dumb!" he protested, "They'll hurt you!" I rolled my eyes, prying his hand off mine. "I'm the Prince of Darkness, if anything they'll definitely give a second thought before trying to lay a hand on me," I reassured him before exiting the carriage. Now that I had a clear view, I could easily count the number of people in the group. *10...12...18...30...wait 30?!* A bead of sweat dripped down my neck–definitely not due to the blazing sun.

"Well well well, do my eyes deceive me? So you *are* harbouring the traitor," a man called out from the group. He held a long sword and was the only one not wearing a hood. *Probably the leader.* He was about middle-aged with tan skin and half his hair was shaved. America and Italy spun to face me, eyes wide. Italy shook his head wildly as he let out a nervous laugh, "What? Nah, that *has* to be a mirage. Say, do you fancy some water? Isn't it *sooooo* hot today?" I mentally face-palmed, cursing Italy's bullshitting skills. A person from the group took a step forward before they were pushed back into the crowd by the man.

"ARE YOU STUPID LEANDRO?! THEY ARE THE ENEMY!" he roared. There was a meek squeak as the person melted back into the group. A chorus of sighs went through the group. The leader pinched his nose before taking a step forward. Immediately America's ability blazed to life as flames covered his body. "Nuh–uh," he wagged a finger disapprovingly, shaking his head. The leader's eyes widened as he stared at America.

"Stand down," I ordered, prompting America to look at me in confusion. Italy gave me an incredulous look as he waved his hands back and forth. *I'm serious, stand down,* I glared, hoping they understood the message. America sighed dramatically but deactivated his ability, taking a step back. I eyed the group as I crossed my arms.

"Why have you stopped us?" I asked,

"Why are you with them?!" the leader shot back angrily, "Don't tell me you've forgotten your allegiance!"

"When have I ever pledged allegiance to my father's cause?" I hissed, narrowing my eyes.

"You're his son! Of course you're automatically faithful to him! Don't tell me you are with those *Stücke Scheiße*!" the leader spat. I scoffed, letting out a harsh laugh. "Me? Automatically faithful to him? *What* world are you from?!" I barked, body tensing. Despite the scary front I was putting up, I was shaking like a leaf inside. Confrontation was not my forte.

The leader shook in anger, gaping like a fish. "You...you..." he gritted his teeth, "What has the old hag done to you? The Deutsch Family is supposed to be strong! You've gone soft!" I flinched, his words driving home a point I'd been trying to avoid for years. Ever since the war ended, my kingdom's so-called "aggressiveness" had toned down a lot in a bid to help our poor trade. Not that it worked of course. I clenched my fists, looking at the ground as the leader continued to insult me.

"Soft?" my voice was quiet but somehow seemed to silence him. I looked up, a murderous rage in my eyes, and repeated myself, "Soft?!" The leader nodded and opened his mouth but before he could say anything, I punched him. He fell to the ground, nose bleeding as his group held their weapons up. He uttered something and before I knew it, all 29 people were rushing towards America, Italy and the others. Before I could react, he grappled me and pushed me down to the ground.

"You'll pay for this," the leader hissed and my face scrunched up in disgust as his breath hit me. *Do they not brush their teeth?* He pinned me down, kneeling down on my back. I let out a groan of pain as I tried to push him off. *REMEMBER THE LESSONS NATO GAVE,* East screamed at me. "Shut up!" I snarled as I grabbed blindly, hoping to be able catch his stupid limbs.

"You're weak Germany. Admit it and maybe I'll spare you. I'm sure

Master would love you as a gift," he chuckled darkly, "Perhaps my girls will–WOAH!" I slammed him onto the ground having been able to grab his wrist. I knee-ed him in the gut, grabbing his throat, adrenaline coursing through my veins as I pressed down on it. "Who is Master?" I snarled, eyes wide, heaving. He gasped, clawing at my hands as I pressed harder, repeating my question.

"A...A..." his eyes rolled to the back of his head. I released my vice grip, panting, too angry to care that I might have just killed someone. I stood up, brushing off the dust and grime on my hands, turning to assess the situation. The others had exited the carriages, brandishing weapons of their own. Poland and America were pretty much carrying the team while Singapore was nowhere to be seen...

"SHIT!" a woman screamed as Singapore pounced on her, twisting her arm. He didn't bat an eye before slinking away into the crowd. Canada and Ukraine were fighting off a few people from the carriages while Italy cowered behind Japan whose eyes were glowing as she casted a spell which seemingly forced everyone away from them. I took a step forward only to be dragged back.

"You thought you could run? My my my, that was a *serious* miscalculation," shivers went down my spine but before I could do anything, I was thrown to the ground. The leader towered over me, grinning maniacally. *Insanity does many things to a person*, Egypt's words echoed in my mind as I held back his hands from grabbing my throat. *What the hell? When did he get so strong?* And then I felt it.

A strong power–emitting from the leader. My eyes widened as the power got stronger and stronger–almost crushing in a sense– his hands wrapping around my throat. I gasped for air as he continued to squash my windpipe. "Le...let...me go," I wheezed, dark spots dancing in my vision.

"You're such a disgrace to your father's legacy y'know?" the leader growled as I clawed at his hands. Despite the predicament I was in, I could clearly hear how his voice had changed. It was deeper and seemed to be overlaid with another person's. "It's a shame really, working with those bastards. You have so much potential. Are you sure you don't want to be my eternal vessel, ruling the world?" the

leader's sour breath wasn't helping me as I let out a choked cry.

"Like hell I would! Who...just who are you?" I rasped.

The leader released me and I took a gasp of air, relishing it. Before I could recover fully however, I was pinned onto the ground as the leader used his knees to lock me in place. "Apophis, the great primordial ruler of the universe!" he–no, it– announced, turning my blood to ice. I could feel a strong power radiating from the body and it seemed to twist around me. Perhaps I was hallucinating but I swore I could see tendrils of purple and gold try to wrap around me but they never seem to be able to latch on.

"You..."

"The one you're trying to stop? Yes, I'm *that* Apophis. Now, I'll give you one last chance. Do you want to be my eternal servant and vessel?" Apophis asked, grinning. I half wondered what happened to the leader's soul. Was he even still alive or was he just a husk? As if hearing my thoughts, Apophis leaned in and answered, "The man was weak, hardly being able to even carry the *smallest* bit of my power. Now that he's carrying almost 100% of my ability in this form, I *highly* doubt there's much of his original soul left. You on the other hand..."

"What about me?" I gritted, trying to wiggle my way out. Apophis noticed and grabbed onto my hands, tutting. "Didn't they teach you etiquette in that...academy of yours? It's rude to move away when someone's talking. Besides, I've yet to finish my proposal. Now if you–"

"Can it, asshole," I spat, venom in my voice.

The others were unable to help me, too busy trying to fend off the attackers. Apophis snickered as it continued, "Don't worry, you wouldn't be a husk. No no, in fact, has your father ever told you that you carry a part of me within you. Right here," he tapped my forehead. I froze, my gut twisting as I fought the urge to puke. *Impossible...when? I would have known right?* My world began to spiral as my breaths came out short and shallow. Maybe it was some placebo effect that made me feel this sense of power coursing

through my veins but it made me dizzy and I shut my eyes. Apophis laughed at my reaction as its voice took on a pitying tone.

"It's too bad that the stupid woman gave you that amulet. You'd be so much stronger if you took it off you know?" its voice was like a snake in the state I was in, slithering into my mind, twisting my thoughts. *Take...take it off? I...**WE NEED MORE POWER!*** My eyes snapped open as I found my surroundings tinged in purple.

WE NEED IT! The voice was coming from my head and it sounded like East and Apophis both at once. I could hear a faint voice begging me to hold on strong and not give in but it was so faint... And the necklace was heavy and warm... *I'll...I'll just take it off for...for one...minute...yea, one minute.* My hands moved on their own accord as my vision wavered.

"GERMANY NO!" Poland's desperate voice snapped me out of my trance as a wave of heat washed over me. Apophis screamed in some unknown language and the pressure on my body loosened as I threw the body off me. It rolled away, laying limp in the sand. Poland ran over, panting as he helped me up.

"Are you okay?" he asked worriedly, holding me by the shoulders. I nodded, shaking my head as I felt slightly trancy still. The voice was nagging in my head but it was more subdued than before. "One minute," I murmured, ignoring Poland's protests as I limped over to the leader's body. I pulled at the necklace but made no further move to remove it. Apophis was curled up, groaning, part of the body blistering red like it was burnt. Kneeling down, I grabbed its chin roughly earning a groan of pain. A shiver went up my spine as I smiled wickedly.

"You're a fool!" Apophis growled, "Playing with a primordial power? Just wait until you reach your home kingdom, I swear you'll regret it!"

" I don't know what you did to me but *I swear*, when *I* find your body, you're dead," I growled, placing more pressure on its chin. Apophis groaned as more blisters on its body popped, releasing a clear fluid over its skin. "You're just a mere mortal, there's *no* way you will be able to banish me. Not even your stupid little group will

be able to stop me. Soon, that small bit of me within you will surpass Egypt's protection spell and you'll be begging for my power," it sneered even as I continued to pop the blisters one by one.

"Like hell I would!" I snapped, grabbing onto its neck, pressing my thumbs into the vital regions as I sat on it, pressing my full weight on the body. Apophis choked but continued to smile cruelly at me. *Go on weakling,* its actions seemed to say, fueling my anger as it began to writhe about uncontrollably. Foam dribbled out of the mouth. I felt a sense of exhilaration as I started to shake, giggling. Over the roar of blood in my ears, I heard Poland screaming at me to stop.

"YOU'RE KILLING HIM!"

Or rather I *had* killed Apophis. The body was limp, eyes rolled to the back of its head. Foam dripped out its mouth, pooling in the sand. The only thing that remained the same was the crazed smile on its (or was it his? Apophis *was* gone, right? That meant the leader was back...I suppose.)–his face. I shivered, wiping my hands on my pants. The bubbles of happiness had popped and all that remained was disgust.

A hand clamped down on my shoulder as I was forcefully spun around. *SMACK!* I held my cheek gingerly as I stared at Poland in shock. "YOU STUPID ASSHOLE! HOW COULD YOU KILL HIM?!" he screamed, face red. The others stared at me, frowning. America narrowed his eyes at me, held back by Ukraine. However, her lips were pursed, hesitation within her eyes.

"I KNEW IT, YOU'RE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER! WHY DID I EVER TRUST YOU?!" Poland's words snapped me back to attention causing my eyes to widen. My heart throbbed as he continued to curse at me. Finally, I lost it after hearing a particularly nasty comment about my family–or rather, my non-existent mother.

"*I'm stupid?*" I started as Poland and the others nodded furiously. Singapore only watched on as he lugged the bodies of the other occult members to the side. "You killed someone Germany," Italy said in a matter of fact tone.

"FOR A GOOD REASON! HE...THE LEADER WAS POSSESSED. By *Apophis*, our enemy! What the hell did you want me to do? Keep a possessed man alive? He was dead anyways. All Apophis was using him for was a vessel for its being! *I* ended his suffering!" I yelled, balling my fists.

"You can't seriously be trying to play the victim here. Face it Germany, *you* just killed a *relatively* innocent man. Look at the rest of us! All *we* did was to knock the others unconscious. You? You're a murderer!" Italy snapped. I felt something sharp in my chest as I glared at him.

"Oh please, stop playing Mr Nice Guy! It's not like you've not killed anyone before. In fact I'm pretty sure it's you who killed your father. If anything you're equally as bad as me!" I spat, hysterical, not caring I'd revealed his secret that me and Japan were only supposed to know. Poland, Ukraine, Singapore and the Britannia Twins looked at Italy in confusion. Betrayal appeared on his face before being swallowed by anger. His eyes flashed dangerously as he took a step forward before being pulled back by Japan. She whispered something to him and he made no further move.

"Germany, just accept it please?" Japan tried to mediate the conflict, "You *did* kill him." The others nodded in agreement only fueling my indignance. America added, "Dude, just admit it. Come on, even a bit of remorse is better than nothing." I gritted my teeth, surveying the group for someone who might be supporting me. Singapore was leaning against the carriage, eyes shut. I hung my head, trying to hold back tears of frustration. The others took the opportunity to hurl insults at me, Poland leading them.

"Just give it up!"

"You did something wrong, why can't you admit it!"

"Don't be like your father," I looked up sharply at Poland. "What the hell is that supposed to mean?" my voice dropped an octave lower as I looked at the group through hooded eyes.

"Exactly how I meant it to be! You–"

My anger boiled over as I punched Poland in the face. He fell backwards, blood dripping from his nose. "You...punched me," he glared at me, staggering to his feet, slamming his body onto mine. We tussled, rolling about in the sand even as some of the others tried to pry us apart (no doubt only for Poland's sake). They weren't successful as I hissed into Poland's ear, "I was going to be kind to you if you'd shut up after your initial outburst but you've really pushed me." He froze as I grabbed him by the throat, straddling his body.

"T...you fucking bastard...no...Germany, please...no," he wheezed as I crushed his throat. Suddenly, someone knocked a hard object into my head. My grip loosened as I was dragged off Poland's body, my vision tunnelling. It swallowed me whole as I fell into unconsciousness.

Translation:

Stücke Scheiße!--Pieces of shit!

A/N: My creative energy is flowing and I may have added stuff that wasn't even supposed to be in the planningggggggg~~~

Hopefully this chapter is good, I like it but some of the evil dialogue sounds super weird to me... that or I suck at acting out these lines.

One thing I wanted to also announce is that this book's rating is now mature. I just did it in case Wattpad thinks my book isn't for the young ones... I have come to realise that I think I wrote a *bit* too much violence and er...possible gore. And erm, I'm also tired of censoring my swear words so Mature rating it is! (Even though the number of cuss words is low--ish, I want to just play safe)

You can take this as my contribution to Gore-tober . Speaking of gore, I actually have written a set of case files for my next story and I showed it too my friend who told me she was very concerned for me. Apparently, I do have a knack (which isn't good) for writing about murders. ;-; In any situation, that book is probably not going to come out for at least another couple

months even though I've already started planning and writing chapters since BbD is my current main focus. But if you have questions about the next book, I'll be more than happy to answer them! (Plot is subject to change**)**

But I don't want this to be doom and gloom so have some memes:

[image]

[image]

(Credit: Pinterest)

Aight, bye and see you soon :D

Recollection

[image]

*" **Ego Rex Tenebrarum Tertium Reich monstrum primordiale voco, dominum meum ac dominum. Semen animae tuae in hoc corpore plantabo, fili mi, Corona princeps Reipublicae foederalis Germaniae. Hanc oblationem tu suscipe,** " I struggled against my bonds as icy hands dug into my scalp. My father stood in front of me, holding a large book as he continued to chant. I cried, not understanding why I was there. I hadn't done anything wrong...right? My father stared down at me, emotionless, as the circle I was in began to glow. The hands on my head disappeared as the candles surrounded around me began to flicker before being blown out one by one. The chanting got louder as people stepped out of the shadows and linked their arms together. I struggled harder as a horrible pain ripped through my skull. I let out a shrill shriek, trying to curl into a ball but couldn't due to my bonds.*

*As if the pain couldn't get worse, it doubled as two large spectral hands dug into my skull. I couldn't breathe, my vision wavering as I laid limp on the ground. My head lolled to the side and I let out a weak whine, unable to utter a word. Whispers filled my ears in an ancient tongue I couldn't understand as the chanting crescendoed. My father slowly entered the circle, placing a hand on my forehead, still chanting away. I wanted to ask him, "Why? Why? What did I do?" Yet, I couldn't voice out my thoughts, a heavy weight pressing down on my chest. He smiled at me, almost maniacal as he leaned down to whisper, "When this is over, you'll be the most powerful person in the world. Beside me, we'll rule over Pangea, all will bow to the Deutsch family!" My eyes widened as I let out another whine. He shook his head, continuing, "Right now you're weak but with this ritual, you'll be stronger. The strongest man in the Deutsch family! Don't you want that Germany?" I shook my head, horrified. Despite my young age, I knew instinctively, **this** was not a good thing.*

My father's eyes darkened as he left. The pain increased and I let out a hoarse scream. Someone placed something on my face and it smelled

funny. Soon, my vision began to darken and before I knew it, I was out.

*

When I came to, Oma was tending to me, a worried yet angered look on her face. My head was still aching and my vision was blurred. "How are you feeling Germany?" she asked tenderly. I shook my head, immediately regretting it. "Why do I feel weird, Oma?" I asked softly, feeling tears pool at the corners of my eyes. She bit his lip as she smoothed my hair back.

"Do you remember anything Germany? Like how you got here?" she asked. I paused as I murmured, "Papa...he..." My body shook as I began to recall the horrid memories. I started to hyperventilate as tears slowly fell. Oma held me, patting my back as she crooned a soft tune. "Calm down, you're not there anymore. Shhhhhh, you're with me, shhhhhhh," she cooed as I continued to sob, gasping for air. It felt like my surroundings were warping and I was back in the room, bound to the ground. Oma's face warped dramatically and I saw my father's face which made me shriek. "GET AWAY FROM ME!" I cried, struggling to be released from the vice-like grip. "Germany!" a voice yelled as several hands grabbed me. I thrashed about, biting down on a hand. A yelp was heard as the hand pulled away. The memories continued to assault me and I panicked.

"FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY LISTEN TO ME!" Oma's voice snapped me out of my panicked fueled state as reality slowly came back to me. There were 5 servants including my attendant, Berlin, surrounding me. A servant was nursing a bleeding wound on his hand, wincing as another tried to stop it with a handkerchief.

"Breath Germany, you're safe here," she told me, "Breath in. Breath out. Good boy," she ruffled my hair. She smiled softly at me, eyes crinkling but it soon darkened as she asked me, "What did your Papa do to you?"

"I...he...I don't...I..." I didn't know how to explain it so I repeated his words, "He...he told me...I would be very powerful and we...we...rule...the world." Oma's eyes darkened as she stood up from her crouched position. "Berlin, if you don't mind, help me clean up Germany and put him to bed. I need to have a talk with the Kaiser," she told my attendant.

"Of course Königinmutter Prussia," Berlin bowed before ordering the other servants except the bleeding one to follow Oma. She thanked him, pecking me on the forehead before leaving. The door closed softly behind her and Berlin quickly ushered me to the bathroom where he gave me a nice soapy bubble bath. I knew he was being really nice that day because he let me play in the water until it was almost cold. Normally he didn't do that, citing Oma's disagreements with him over it. After he dried me and dressed me in a shirt and shorts before carrying me to my bed. Tucking me in, I felt the surge of energy I had previously waned and I let out a soft cough making Berlin frown.

"I'm okay!" I reassured him though it did not stop him from placing a hand on my forehead. I swatted it away, frowning as I pointed to the book on my bedside table. "I want a story!" I told him, earning a chuckle from Berlin. "Okay okay," he placated me, opening up the book. He began to tell a tale about a pretty girl and her evil stepmother. Slowly, my eyelids began to get heavier and before I knew it, I was sound asleep.

~

I woke up, startled to find myself back in the carriage, slumped on the seat in an awkward position. Singapore was opposite me, staring out of the window, a bored look on his face. "Singapore?" I rasped, surprised to find my throat hoarse. "You're finally awake!" he chirped, eyes lighting up, "I was half expecting that you wouldn't wake up for a while since Canada *did* hit you on the head pretty hard." I sat up, wincing at my sore muscles.

"How long was I out for?" I asked, gratefully taking the canteen of water Singapore offered to me. The cool liquid slid down my throat and helped to freshen me up a little. He thought for a moment before replying, "About 3 hours thereabout." My eyes widened and I nearly choked on my water.

"3 hours?!" I spluttered.

Singapore shrugged before leaning forward, clasping his hands. "I know you've just woken but I really don't have much time. What's the last thing you remember before finding yourself here?" he asked. My body stiffened as I recalled what I had done to Poland, all the harsh words I said and how–

"I tried to kill him," the gravity of what I'd committed crushed me, leaving me paralysed. Singapore smiled grimly as he continued, "The others–minus Japan–wanted to leave you with the er...occult group but I managed to convince them to bring you along. But I warn you, they aren't happy with you at all. Especially America."

Of course. Prince Charming wants to save the day as usual, I could almost hear the eye roll in East's voice as he said that. West scolded him and they began bickering but for once, I wasn't focused on them. The way they were arguing... I frowned as a foreign memory flashed through my mind. It was brief and I could hardly remember it but the feeling it left behind...it left me confused. *When did East and West appear?* When I tried to recall how they'd come about, I couldn't at all. All I came up with was a fuzzy memory of me sitting in my room...royal doctor...Berlin... *Wait, that's not right is it? I th–*

"Earth to Germany!" Singapore waved a hand in front of my face. I shook my head, apologising for spacing out. He gave me a concerned look, asking if I was okay. I nodded, forcing myself to smile. He looked sceptical but didn't press the issue any further.

"As I was saying, the map Egypt gave seems to be enchanted or something since the route changed. So now, we're going to go through the Kingdom of Winter. Thankfully we've got some warm clothing so we'll be fine–mostly. As for the arrangements, we're with Japan and Ukraine now. They're outside driving."

"Oh," I replied, still preoccupied with that *nagging* feeling. And the dream. It had felt all so familiar and a part of me felt like I'd actually experienced it before. *Dreams aren't* ***that*** *realistic are they?* Perhaps they were and I was still reeling from it. Vater would never have hurt me right? He...he loved me. I thi–I mean I was sure, sheltering me from the harsh reality of war. (At least until I found out about his deeds against Poland and his father.) That *was* what most fathers did...at least to my knowledge. "But your father wasn't *most* fathers," Wes–or maybe it was East–reminded me gently. I shook my head, frustrated. The more I tried to recall the dream, the more blurry the details became. My heart raced as I struggled to remember all I could. Normally, it wasn't hard for me to remember all my dreams but *this* specific one eluded me. It was as if my brain specifically wanted to forget it.

"Are you okay Germany? You keep spacing out," Singapore shifted to sit next to me, nearly falling face first onto the seat as the carriage jerked. I shook and nodded my head at the same time, not sure how to answer. "Erm, how's Poland," I asked him, wanting to change the subject. *That dream probably wasn't that important. I'm under a lot of stress so I suppose it's natural I forget stuff I don't need to remember.* Singapore opened his mouth, looking like he wanted to pursue the matter but shut his mouth, fiddling with his hands.

"He's fine," he replied, "A bit terrified but mostly mad."

"You don't think he'll accept an apology right?" I joked. If Singapore got the joke, he didn't show it. Instead, he took out a container of food. "You should eat up. You missed lunch," he told me. As if on cue, my stomach grumbled. I laughed sheepishly as I took the food from him with a grateful smile. Opening it, I immediately dug in, hunger taking over. Halfway through my meal, he asked, "What made you think the leader was possessed? I don't really get it." My eyes darkened and I set down my utensils as I looked at him.

"His eyes! They were purple and his voice was different. And the leader even admitted it him–well Apophis admitted it. And I *had* to kill the leader," my voice was becoming more and more frantic as I continued to speak, "He was a *husk*. *A husk*. Even if I managed to dispel Apophis, the leader would be dead either way!"

Singapore didn't reply, deep in thought. I panted as I pleaded for him to understand where I was coming from. As I did, my voice got more and more desperate. "Please, I can't lose your trust too," I told him, distraught. Singapore sighed as he faced me.

"Germany," I crossed my fingers, listening attentively to his words, "I believe you." I let out a sigh of relief, unable to contain my gratitude. "Thank you," I choked out to which he smiled softly. However, it soon faded into solemnity as I recalled Apophis's words. *Has your father ever told you that you carry a part of me within you?*

'Does this have anything to do–No Germany, you already said you'd forget it!' I argued with myself, biting my cheek. Yet, somehow, I couldn't shake off the sense that my dream *was* in fact something I needed to recall. *Why the hell can't I remember it though?* Singapore

seemed to notice the turmoil within me and placed a hand on my shoulder. "What are you thinking about now?" he asked gently, as if caring for a scared creature. I hesitated, a part of me wanting to tell him the truth but the other half unwilling to. What if he changed his tune once he heard me out? Singapore looked at me, tilting his head, waiting for my answer.

I forced a smile onto my face and shook my head, "Nothing much."

"Doesn't seem like 'nothing much' to me. You're biting your cheek and fiddling with your hands. I promise I won't judge you if that's what you're worried about," he told me. *Really? Or are you going to run once you hear that I carry a part of Apophis within me?*

"I'm not going to push you to tell me but I'll always be here if you need a listening ear. And I'm sure...Japan would be willing too," he continued softly, looking away. I nodded slowly but reassured him that I was fine. He sighed and told me we'd be due to switch with the girls soon. Silence engulfed us and I started to think about the dream again.

A sharp pain hit me in the head and I let out a groan of pain. Memories I had no recollection of flashed through my mind as feelings of fear, anxiety and pain grabbed a hold of me. My eyes widened as I felt myself being sucked into the strange memories. *No...no...no...*

"Germany?" a boy called out but it was like he was underwater or was he? The lines between the present and past were blurring before my very eyes. I was trapped, forced to experience memories I was unable to recall. Yet they felt familiar like I had been there when it happened. Childish laughter filled my ears intertwined with screams that sounded like mine. Cold sweat dripped down my face as my heart began to beat extremely fast. *Shit...shit...shit...*

"He knows," a voice whispered through the chaos. It sounded like a female–a familiar one that is but who was she?

"Shut up West," a harsh male voice scraped my ears. It was also familiar but I couldn't remember who it was either.

Who are you people? What is going on? I wanted to scream but my voice was caught in my throat. I felt like I was drowning and no matter how hard I tried to struggle to the surface, something kept pulling me back into the deep abyss.

"Should I take over?" the female voice asked in concern.

"Absolutely not! You know nothing of the outside world goddamnit!" the male voice responded angrily, "We made a promise West! You have to keep it."

"But–"

"NO BUTS!"

In that moment, everything seemed to click together. My eyes widened as I gasped the ocean in my mind parting for me. "Germany!" Singapore shook me worriedly as I turned to look at him. His face blurred into another face...like...it looked like East...and West at the same time. "Germany? Hey! Look at me!" Singapore grabbed my face as my body shook uncontrollably, "What's going on?"

"I remember," I told him breathlessly, "I remember everything."

Translations:
Ego Rex Tenebrarum Tertium Reich monstrum primordiale voco, dominum meum ac dominum. Semen animae tuae in hoc corpore plantabo, fili mi, Corona princeps Reipublicae foederalis Germaniae. Hanc oblationem tu suscipe-- I, the King of Darkness, Third Reich call on the primordial monster, my lord and master. I will plant the seed of your soul in this body, my son, Crown Prince Federal Republic of Germany. May you accept this offer.

A/N: Welp, I managed to publish this earlier than expected so yayyyyy! Any guesses on what Covid (Ger) recalled? Also lemme know your thoughts on how I can improve my writing! (Just pls voice them respectfully thank you!)

Lil' life update is that I recently had a reader's theatre performance (basically reading off the script with little

dramatisation) and mannnnnnnn it was so good! I even got flowers from my friends :D

Have this birdy that looks like it has a buzz haircut:

[image]

Anyways, I don't have much to say for today so bye!

Confession

[image]

"T...you fucking bastard...no...Germany, please...no," I wheezed as I tried to pry off Germany's hands off my neck. His eyes were wide, pupils constricted as he continued to strangle me. My vision began to tunnel and I let out a low chuckle. *So this is how I end huh? Death by TR's stupid offspring.* Just before I passed out, Canada slammed something into Germany's temple. Germany's grip loosened and Ukraine and Japan pulled his limp body away from me. I gasped for air as America dropped next to me.

"Are you okay?" he asked, worriedly. I nodded wordlessly, savouring the fresh air. My body shook uncontrollably as Canada walked over to us. "What do we do with him?" Canada asked, jerking a hand towards the unconscious German.

"We're leaving him," America hissed, jaw clenched, "Right Poland?"

"Yeah, we are," I managed to rasp, massaging my neck which was probably beginning to bruise. Singapore knelt down next to Germany, checking his pulse before reporting, "He's not going to be awake for a good while but he's alive."

"Well I wish he were dead! In fact–"

"America no!" Japan snapped uncharacteristically, "It's one thing to want to leave him here but it's an *entirely* different story if you want to kill him!" We all stared at her as she glared back at us. Singapore looked at us from his crouched position next to Germany, confused. "If it wasn't for him none of us would be here right now. Yes he nearly tried to kill Poland but *you!*" she turned towards me, eyes blazing with fury, "You also started it! Why did you say all those things? Killing someone was wrong but this guy was *actually* evil. His father–"

"You can't seriously be taking that bastard's side!" Italy interjected, face red.

"I'm not taking anyone's side. I'm not saying Germany was right! None of us are! But to say...to say that...to wish he were dead is entirely different!" Japan argued. Like a domino effect, we began to argue with her. Even Canada–who was usually the most calm and collected out of all of us; only Singapore stayed out of it.

"Don't you get it?! He tried to kill me! If we let him continue, what's next? He's probably going to hurt–worse, kill–us all!" I told Japan who looked ready to slap me. (And for the record, I've been slapped by her before in Year 1 and it was *fricking* painful) She clenched her fists, taking a step forward as everyone crowded around me in an attempt to protect me from further harm. She raised her fists as America prepared to block her.

"STOP!" Singapore yelled out of the blue, coming between him and Japan. Surprisingly nothing happened to him as he distanced Japan from us. "All this fighting isn't worth it! The longer we spend here yelling about this, the more land Apophis is going to conquer. We–*I*–did not risk my father's life for all this arguing so shut up right now and pay attention," he told us sternly. America's jaw hung open as he stared at the fuming Singaporean. Canada placed a hand on his brother's shoulder, pulling him back.

"Yes Germany is wrong, I see that, killing or trying to kill someone is horrible. But at the same time, Japan is right. You can't wish death on him either, that makes you *equally* as bad as him. So we're going to bring Germany along and me *and* Japan will make sure he behaves himself. Should he show that he cannot be around us, *then* and only then will we make the choice to leave him behind," his ruby red eyes were ablaze and for a moment, I swore I could see the spirit of a lion-fish hybrid behind him. I blinked and it was gone. *I'm hallucinating. It's not real.* America's shocked expression morphed into one of pure rage as he took a step forward towards Singapore. "You seriously think you can make up the rules? Who do you think you are? You're just a–"

"America don't," Ukraine warned, "Don't say something you'll regret." America's tense shoulders slumped as he rolled his eyes,

muttering a couple unkind words under his breath. Singapore stared at us, expressionless as if waiting for our reply. Ukraine, America, Canada, Italy and I huddled together in a bid to discuss the situation. "What do we do? I don't want him following us!" America hissed. Italy nodded furiously as he muttered, "That bastard can't follow us. Never. I say we disagree and leave Japan and Singapore behind with him."

"Poland what do you think? You're the one who holds more stakes in this choice," Ukraine asked gently.

I paused thinking carefully. After a second, I murmured, "I don't want him here but..." The memory of me being choked by Germany flashed through my mind sending a chill down my spine. Swallowing my saliva, I continued, "But Singapore has a point. If we leave Germany behind, I'm not sure how successful we'll be. But I don't want him anywhere near me."

"Alright then it's settled," Canada clapped me on the back, walking over to Singapore. They exchanged a few words, Singapore nodding his head furiously as he signalled to Japan to come nearer. After another few minutes, Canada motioned to Ukraine, whispering something into her ear. She nodded before turning to us, "Come on guys, it's time to go. I'll be with Japan, Singapore and Germany." Singapore grabbed Germany's arms as Japan helped him to lift Germany up. They slowly brought him over to the carriage, laying him on the seat before Singapore got in. Japan hopped onto the driver's seat, staring into the distance.

We slowly made our way to our own carriage. "I'll drive first," I offered. Everyone agreed although Italy requested to sit next to me. "I need some fresh air," he explained. I found his explanation weird but chose not to question him. Once our group checked that everything was in order, we resumed our journey.

*

Clop, clop, clop! I stared out into the distance, occasionally rubbing my sore neck. The sun was ridiculously hot and sweat dripped down my face. Italy was quiet, too quiet in fact. His face was blank, eyes unseeing as he sat still. Worry gnawed at my heart as I broke

the silence with my question. He didn't reply and I looked at him. His dull eyes stared at me as if registering the question. I waved a hand in front of his face as some spark returned to his lifeless gaze.

"Italy?"

"Huh? Oh...yeah. I'm good," he replied hurriedly, "Just...erm...thinking. That's all."

My eyes narrowed even as I kept my eyes on the road. "Want to tell me what you're thinking about? You seem pretty deep in thought earlier," I commented as casually as I could.

"Art. As usual," Italy answered but I could hear the edge to his voice. Something was *definitely* wrong. Italy wasn't one to hide things and rarely lied to anyone. "Are you sure?" I prodded as he nodded vigorously.

"Yes Poland," annoyance crept through his voice and I decided to give up asking him any further. The last thing I needed to occur was us getting into a fight. A tense atmosphere fell upon us and I swore I could see dark storm clouds appear around Italy. My thoughts raced about as I wondered what he was actually thinking about. *I don't think I'm overthinking. Something about Italy's demeanour is fishy.* I stole a glance at him, noting how his face had taken on a slight frown. *Could it be the heat? Or maybe he's still in shock...or maybe he's not happy with Germa–*

Apparently I'm terrible at multitasking. Ukraine yelled at me as I nearly crashed into her carriage. "Do you need to switch with Italy?" Japan asked as I steadied my carriage. I shot her glare– *Enemy*–and she gulped before looking away. "Do you want our carriage to take the lead first?" Ukraine asked and I nodded. She nudged Japan as their carriage sped up a little to overtake ours.

"We're going to be entering the Kingdom of Winter by the next shift so relay that over to the twins in your carriage okay?" Ukraine yelled, the sharp edge in her voice not going unnoticed. I hollered back a 'yes' before relaying the information to America and Canada. There was a loud groan and then a slap before some muffled squabbling could be heard.

I rolled my eyes as I tried my best to focus. Yet it seemed like my efforts failed me as I continued to look at Italy, the curiosity of what he was hiding gnawing away at my heart. Unable to quell the curious cat within me, I nudged him. He looked up, a flash of irritation appearing on his face.

"What?"

"I was wondering–"

"Stop asking me questions, okay?!" Italy's harsh attitude shocked me and our carriage nearly careened into some cactus. "SHIT!" Italy yelped, grabbing my wrist. Hissing in pain, I grabbed onto the horses' reins like they were my lifeline as they let out a loud neigh. Japan stuck her head to stare at us as I shot her another glare. *Go away*. She narrowed her eyes, looking at Italy who clutched his chest like he had just seen a ghost (In retrospect, he'd most likely seen whatever afterlife entity there was) I flicked my free hand to the side and she pursed her lips before turning her head away.

"What the hell, were you trying to kill us?!" Italy hissed, face pale with terror.

"Of course not. *You're* the one who tried to nearly kill us!" I snapped. His eyes went wide and his tight grip on my hand loosened and I shook his hand away. I looked away, refusing to make eye contact with him. *Fricking idiot.* My grip on the reins tightened and the horses let out a sharp whine of pain. My eyes widened slightly in realisation as I loosened my grip slightly. They whinnied loudly before falling silently.

"Poland, I'm sorry I was harsh towards you," Italy apologised. I glanced at him, letting out a neutral hum. He sighed before continuing, "I didn't mean to snap. I...I just have a lot on my mind that's all. And...I guess Germany's situation isn't helping with it. I know it's a shitty excuse and I'm really sorry."

I processed what he said, mulling over it. After a while, I asked tentatively, "Do you want to talk about it? About what you're thinking about."

Italy remained silent and I hurriedly added, "I shouldn't have pushed you and I'm sorry for it but I just thought...y'know it could help you. Your thoughts seem to be consuming you." He let out a groan, rubbing his face. He faced me with weary eyes as he whispered, "You can't tell anyone about this okay?"

I nodded and he slumped in his seat. "Where do I start?" he murmured, looking down at the ground. I waited patiently for him to start, not wanting to push him. He opened and closed his mouth, biting his cheek as he fiddled with the hem of his shirt. "Remember...do you remember what Germany revealed earlier? About me...being a murderer too?" he asked me softly.

I nodded trying my best not to show too much emotion for fear of him clamming up. "What about it?" I asked. Italy shifted in his seat before saying, "It's true. I *did* kill someone."

"What?!"

I stared at him, eyes wide. *I thought Germany just said it in a fit of anger!* Italy looked at me startled and I saw his eyes clouding over. *Shit.* "Hey, I didn't mean it like that! I'm just really surprised!" I laughed nervously, cringing internally at myself. Italy looked at me sighing once more.

"I don't look like a killer huh?" he laughed but it was hollow.

"Not really, I mean...you seem to be a very cheery guy," I told him.

"It's a skill I've honed," Italy replied back casually, "Some days I'm not sure if the joy I feel is real or is it just me acting so I can continue playing the good guy."

I remained silent, slightly uncomfortable with how he'd just let those words roll off his tongue. Shifting in my seat, I asked, "So...who did you, y'know."

"My father. King Fascist Italy," Italy replied after a moment of silence.

So the rumours were true after all. Midway through the war, the Kingdom of Historia had suddenly chosen to switch sides. This was

due to the mysterious assassination of their king and for years after that, rumours had swept through the royal world that Italy had been the assassin behind his father's demise. The royal court that took over (Italy was too young to take over the throne) denied the claims, scoffing at the idea that a–I quote–'*mere child*' would murder anyone, and most certainly not his father. They claimed to have found the assassin, going through this *huge* trial, lasting the entirety of the war, before the assassin was executed. My father didn't believe them but he didn't care much about it, only working to survive our time under TR and later, rebuilding our kingdom. The only thing he was grateful for was that thanks to the switch Historia made, it helped to speed up the war's end since the allies were able to use Historia's intel on the enemies to sabotage most of their plans. It was also one of the leading reasons as to why Italy wasn't *as* hated on as compared to Germany. (Japan's case was...unique I suppose but she also had a fair share of haters until Ame came into the picture.)

"Why...why did you kill him?" I questioned.

"He was a tyrant! He kept forcing soldiers to fight a war we were losing. I couldn't understand why he'd do it. Sending...sending the men to a pointless death was...it was cruel. I told him–begged him to stop the madness but he never listened. So I took it into my own hands," a sharp glint appeared in Italy's eyes and I instinctively shifted my body away from him.

"And you killed him. But how?" I asked.

"It was simple," Italy responded flatly, "I took a knife from the kitchen when I made my servant bring me there. It was a small one so I could hide it in my sleeve. That night, when my father was in his room, asleep, I sneaked into his room and stabbed him in the chest. He didn't even wake up." A small sadistic grin formed on his lips as his eyes clouded over in bloodlust. I gulped, silently praying he wouldn't kill me. *I seriously don't want two murder attempts on me in one day.*

"Did you...did you feel any grief?" the question slipped from my lips and Italy stilled. I braced myself for another round of yelling but to my surprise he didn't. "I...I don't think so?" the bloodlust in his eyes

had receded and was replaced with confusion. He tapped a finger on his thigh before continuing, "I was pretty happy he was dead in all honesty." Noticing my horror, he let out a sharp laugh.

"Bet you weren't expecting happy-go-lucky Italy to have such a dark backstory huh?" he chuckled, sending shivers down my spine. I hesitantly shook my head and he leaned back in his seat. "I've tried to put it all behind me. I told Germany, Japan and her brother not to tell anyone about what I'd done. I tried to act more like my age–like a kid should–but...it's all been tainted. By my one choice. But if you asked me if I regret it, I'll tell you I don't. I would rather I kill him than let some random assassin murder him. Makes it feel so much sweeter. Being killed by the one person he never would have expected. His dearest son," Italy sneered.

I remained silent, shivering despite the heat. The way he said it so casually was unnerving to say the least. Italy glanced at me before commenting, "You're shivering. Why? Scared of me now?" I shook my head furiously wanting to tell him no but my voice betrayed me, getting caught in my throat. He sighed, looking up at the sky. I took a quick glance upwards, noting the few birds that circled above us. *Vultures*. One of them screeched before diving down. The others followed suit and they disappeared into the horizon. *That isn't a good omen.*

"Hey, I...I hope this doesn't ruin your view of me. I know I sound...crazy? Yea, crazy that's the word–when I talk about it and I guess it's my way of coping. Not that it should be an excuse but y'know," Italy rambled, scratching the back of his head.

"I...I think it's admirable of you," I blurted out before clapping my hands over my mouth. The horses whined as Italy lurched forward to grab the reins. He gave me a stink eye as he handed them back to me. 'Sorry' I mouthed, sheepish. He rolled his eyes in annoyance but softened after a moment. "You think so?" the corners of his lips tilted upward in a relieved smile as I nodded eagerly.

"I think it's much better than that sorry excuse of a prince! He didn't even try to help me when he saw the clear torture his own dad inflicted on me and my father!" I exclaimed, which made Italy laugh. The dark cloud above us seemed to have lifted as we grinned

at each other.

"Did you see the vultures up there earlier?" Italy asked.

"Yea, they're a bad sign," I sighed. Italy looked at me surprised and I shrugged. "The Kingdom of Light sees vultures as the hellspawn of the Kingdom of Darknesses which isn't entirely wrong to be honest considering some species are from there," I explained, reaching over to pat one of the horses' rump noticing it was slowing down. Italy's eyes widened as he let out a soft 'oh'.

"Well in Historia, we see vultures as a sign of rebirth and good luck. Y'know how they clean up after the remains of the dead animals? Yea, it kind of symbolises rebirth in a way and because of it some citizens think it's good luck. In fact, I heard some people in Historia have vultures as their statues instead of angels which is the traditional "go to" good luck charm," Italy shared.

I stared at him flabbergasted. An image of the vultures feasting on carcasses flashed through my mind and I felt a flash of disgust. How could such a foul creature compared to a one of innocence be considered good luck? If anything, it reminded me of Germany and TR. *Are you seriously going to harp on him nearly killing you?* A voice whispered to me. The rational part of me could see my faults in handling the situation with Germany but the emotional part refused to admit I was also at fault. *Whatever, it's Japan and Singapore's choice to deal with him now. It's not my business.*

"Vultures as good luck charms huh? You learn something new everyday," I mumbled. The vultures were back in the sky, circling once more. Italy's words helped to soothe my fears about them. Perhaps his words rang with some truth.

"Ok, now can I take over? I don't wanna crash again and you've been driving for almost 2 hours straight, " Italy's slightly worried voice broke my train of thought. I looked at him, my focus on the road waning as my grip on the reins loosened. His eyes widened as the horses neighed noisily. I think they must have been cursing at me. *Stupid master, can't even keep us in line properly. What a bloody dolt.*

"I'm fine," I told him, waving a hand.

"No you've lost focus a total of 4 times and it's clear you aren't fit for driving. Come on, let me take over," he insisted, "I'd like to not die today thank you."

"Alright, alright" I told him, handing over the reins to him.

A/N: Haiiiiiiiiiii~ Is anyone shocked at Italy's confession? The facts about vultures being good luck charms was something I found online and it's pretty cool how other cultures view them! Germany also apparently has vultures according to online sources which was rather surprising to note. Have y'all seen vultures before? I haven't lol.

***cough* But enough about birds! I have serious news (or not) :**

Yesterday while finishing the chapter, I accidentally deleted the entire story off my Google Docs (Currently we're at around 93000+ words) and let's say...my panic was very real. Cause for some reason, my undo button kinda was wonky so I had to go to my Version History to find the latest version (which thankfully was most of what I wrote for this chapter)

Moral of the story, be more careful Elijah :D

On another note, we're almost at 10k!!! I'm so happy and wanna thank y'all :D When we hit 10k reads, I'll be putting up another Q&A session as well as maybe some other event.

ALSO, I DID ITTTT I MADE MY FIRST LAYERED PAPER ART HEHEHEHEHEHE!!! I'll put some of the process art in my artbook.

[image]

Errrrr we don't talk about the mess behind lol. But I'm seriously so proud of myself cecihuiehcuohcdihcdwohdjcndicbdc--- By the way, Moscow 2042 is a real book and I tried to imitate the cover as best as I could. I'm pretty proud how this turned out but my marker was

dying when I had to colour in Russia's shirt. R.I.P Grey Ohuhu marker :(

If I do another of these, who do you wanna see next?

I also got the Spy x Family shoes from Skechers!!! :D

[image]

(My photo skills need work)

EEEEEEEEE I can't wait to wear themmmmm :D

Anyways, Question Time!

1) Do you think America is wrong for wanting Germany dead?

2) What songs suit Italy's character?

3) Finally, I asked this a while back but do you have any voice claims for the characters?

Aight, bye!

Understanding

[image]

Singapore looked at me as if I were a madman before spluttering, "You what?!"

"I. Remember. Everything," I repeated slowly. My breathing was slowly returning back to normal as was my sense of reality. Singapore's face seemed less blurry now although I swore I could hear whispers in the back of mind. It sounded faintly like East and West, yet at the same sounded like Vater and Oma. They–the voices–were arguing about...something. I furrowed my brows in confusion but decided to explore that part later.

"What *do* you remember?" Singapore asked curiously.

I paused, frozen in place. "I..." the words I wanted to tell him were stuck in my throat and left me gaping at him dumbly. He cocked his head, raising an eyebrow as if egging me to continue. Swallowing my saliva, I licked my lips which felt dry. "I..." I tried again but to avail.

"Take your time. Do you want me to ask you questions instead?" Singapore suggested. I nodded in relief and he gave me a thumbs up. We sat in silence for a while more before he asked, "Hmmm, is what you remembered something good?"

I shook my head, not trusting myself to not act like a fool again. *Blödes Stück Scheiße.* Singapore hummed, placing his chin in one hand. "Was it a painful memory? Like from the war time?" he questioned.

I thought for a moment, recalling my new-found memories. In those memories, I seemed to be around 3–4 years of age so that put it pre-war I suppose. *Can you trust your memories now though?* A voice whispered in my ear, sending shivers down my spine. Could I? The

more I tried to think back to that time period, the more confused I was. All the "new" memories were merging with my old ones rapidly and it was getting harder to remember what was what.

I'm playing with a toy castle. No. I'm crying in a cell, grabbing my head in agony. Berlin is next to me. Wait, that's not Berlin, it's...a doctor?

"What is going on?" I rub my forehead in frustration, muttering under my breath. The memories that returned were no longer as clear, merging with old memories from–what I assumed to be–the same time period. Singapore shook my shoulder, breaking me out of my trance.

"You good?" he asked me.

"Er...yea. Er...I guess the memories...they're pre-war. I think I was about 3–4 years old?"

Singapore let out a low whistle, nodding like he was impressed. "That's pretty far back," he commented. I nodded hesitantly as he asked me what stood out to me in the memories. "Pain," the answer slipped out of my mouth without a hint of hesitation. His eyebrows shot up as he stood up before promptly sitting back down as the carriage jerked.

"Pain," he echoed my words, voice shaky.

We sat in silence for a long time, the only sound being the unsteady breaths of the Singaporean across me. His face was pale and he was trembling. At that moment, he seemed to have aged at least 10 years, face taut. "Are you...okay?" I asked him in concern. His clouded eyes looked at me and I gasped softly in surprise. The way he looked at me reminded me of Berlin...

He stared at me, eyes filled with anguish as I thrashed about on the ground, screeching. "STOP IT!" I yelled, clawing at my face only to be held back by his strong grasps on my wrists. "MAKE IT STOP!" wails filled the dark room we were in, "MAKE THE YELLING STOP!"

"Prince Germany, what yelling is there?" Berlin asked, half sobbing–whether it was in desperation or frustration that I was unsure—as I

continued to struggle.

I didn't know how to explain it to him back then. I was too young, too innocent. All my tiny toddler self knew was that strange voices which I never heard before were arguing with one another in my mind yet Berlin somehow couldn't hear them. And those voices made my head hurt like hell. But now I knew who they were...roughly I guess. Singapore stared at me through glassy eyes, looking ready to vomit. "What the hell is wrong with the twerp?" East's gruff voice broke through my thoughts. Except I knew this was not East.

"Hello Apophis," I sneered internally, as Singapore jolted out of his trance.

"Huh? Wha...Apophis?" he looked at me in confusion and it was then I realised I had said it out loud. Clarity slowly returned to him as he demanded an explanation. Sweat dripped down my neck and I began to panic. It was like I was a deer caught in the headlights. How do you explain to someone that Daddy Dearest was a cult leader who implanted the very...thing you and your teammates were supposed to destroy?

*School **did not** prepare me for this at all.*

Rubbing my neck, I tried to think of a good explanation without scaring the crap out of Singapore. He crossed his arms, looking at me. *What are you waiting for? Tell me.* Swallowing, I felt my Adam apple bob.

"So...er...about the occult earlier they...they mightttttt–okay not might–they were involved with my father and– And– They're leader, I mean Apophis he...it actually," I rambled on and on and Singapore looked at me in confusion.

"What I mean to say is...I mean my father...he...I don't know how to say but like–"

"Just get to the point," Singapore instructed me, "You're beginning to talk like an old grandmother."

I would have smiled at the joke had the situation been in my favour but I didn't have that luxury. Rubbing a thumb over my hand, I tried to collect my thoughts. After a while, I asked him, "Hypothetically, what would you do if you knew I held a part of Apophis within me?"

Singapore stilled as he whispered, "Don't tell me–"

"Just answer the question."

He pursed his lips, murmuring something under his breath. Perhaps it was a prayer or something. After a moment he replied, "I...I'd probably panic."

"You wouldn't try to run away? Or kill me?" I asked slightly incredulously.

He shrugged, playing with the hem of his shirt. "I don't know...I mean...unless you're currently Apophis and controlled by it maybe my response would be different. You aren't possessed by him right? You just have a bit of its consciousness in your mind," he continued slowly, looking up at me.

I nodded hesitantly, suddenly worrying if Apophis was controlling me without my knowledge. *Can I trust any of my thoughts and memories now?* Panic flooded me and I felt the world closing in on me. Who was I then? Was everything I've done so far, me? Or was Apophis discreetly influencing my choices?

"If that's the case, I don't have anything to worry about then," Singapore replied, bringing me out of my existential crisis. I blinked before sighing in relief as I thanked him. He nodded, gaze softening. "If I may ask, who *is* East Germany and West Germany? Are they...they don't happen to be your siblings right? You were murmuring these names earlier during your...recollection?" he scratched the back of his neck, unsure. A small gasp of horror slipped from my mouth at his question. His face paled and immediately shook his head furiously, reassuring me I didn't have to answer if I didn't want to.

I raised a hand to stop him and he clapped a hand over his mouth.

Lowering my hand, I thought through how I could explain it to him. If he already knew about mini Apophis in my mind, I might as well let him know the whole truth. Afterall, the more he knew, the better it would be for me. I hoped.

"I'm not entirely sure since the sequence of my memories is a bi–very actually–messed up but I'll try my best to explain who East and West are. Not that I'm sure now who they are," I muttered under my breath. Singapore chuckled slightly and it gave me a bit of confidence to continue. "The short version would be East is like the devil on my shoulder and West is the angel. But now...it seems like East is the personification of Apophis and West is like my protector?" my eyebrows scrunched up and I tilted my head, rubbing my chin.

"I'm not *exactly* Apophis. I share some of the traits but I'm still you," East corrected me.

Oh really now?

"East is right. He's still you but he's...how do I put it? Corrupted. We're you and not you at the same time. We are...different sides of you. I guess that would be a good explanation for it," West explained. I frowned, confused. None of it made sense to me. How were they me and not me?

"So...it's like a split personality thing?" Singapore inquired.

"Er...maybe? East just said that he's–yea they have genders erm...anyways he just said that he's not really Apophis Apophis but shares traits with it and West claims the two of them are me but different?" I didn't know why I added the part about them having genders but it felt important to say it out. Singapore shifted in his seat, face scrunched up as he lifted up a hand, tracing a finger in the air.

"None of it makes sense does it?" I laughed. He nodded before asking me another question. "Do you remember how they came about?"

I tried my best to recall but everything was lost in a foggy haze. The

more I tried to recall, the thicker the fog seemed to become. "I...I remember being in...in some dark place...it was musty and I–" my body stilled and I whispered, "Oh gods."

Singapore leaned forward, curiosity shining in his eyes. "What is it? You remembered something else?" he asked me, unable to hide the excitement in his voice. I nodded, hearing my voice saying something but not being able to hear what was being said. It was like I wasn't in my body anymore. I felt like I was being pulled backwards into my mind and suddenly everything went black.

~

I was stuck in a cell, strapped to a bed, gag in my mouth. Tears streamed down my face as I continued to struggle. My head was aching like it was being stabbed multiple times and there were these garbled voices in my head. Oma loomed over me, worry clouding her features. A man dressed in a black coat stood at the foot of the bed, a large book in his hands. It was brown in colour, the leather cover peeling. He had snow white hair and pale skin, brows twisted in a frown.

"Is there anything you can do? I can't bear to watch him live like this!" Oma approached the man and for the first time, I saw anguish in her eyes. She grabbed onto the man's sleeve, begging him to figure something out. He grunted, dropping the book on a table in front of the bed.

"I don't have a cure but this will work," he told Oma, pointing to a spell in the book.

"Erasing his memories? Are you sure? What about you? What if the spell goes wrong?" Oma fretted, "This is an untested spell, what if instead of healing him you...you...you kill him! Surely there's another way! Perhaps–"

"I've thought it through Prussia. I'm confident. I can do this," the mysterious man insisted.

Oma frowned, biting her cheek as she looked towards the bed where I was still thrashing about. "Is there really no other way?" she whispered, sounding almost close to tears. The man shook her head and she took a shuddering breath before nodding. "Very well. Go ahead then," she told

him, wiping her face. The man smiled grimly, patting her on the back. Walking over to the bed, he murmured something under his breath before touching my forehead. I blinked and when I opened my eyes again, the scene had changed.

I was now in my bedroom, looking at Oma. "Good morning Oma!" I chirped, a toothy grin across my face. She smiled, relief in her eyes as she ruffled my hair affectionately. "You little piggy. Berlin couldn't wake you up and had to call me!" she teased me, pulling my cheek. I giggled, throwing my hands around her neck.

"How do you feel? You were sick the whole last week," she asked me.

A sharp pain hit me and I winced but it disappeared as soon as it appeared. I shrugged it off and told her, "I'm fine!" Her smile widened and she kissed me on my forehead. Patting me on my back, she told me to head to the bathroom where a servant was waiting for me. I nodded and hopped off my bed. As I walked to the bathroom, I swore I heard someone call my name. I looked backwards but saw no one.

"Funny," I murmured.

~

I gasped, feeling myself returning to my body. There was a stinging pain in my cheek. Singapore's face was pale as he stammered out, "Are you...are you...you okay?" I looked at him in confusion, still disoriented from the vivid flashback as I touched my sore cheek. "You slapped me," I said in mild surprise.

"You started talking in multiple voices! And you were groaning in pain! I didn't know what to do to snap you out of it so I...I...I slapped you. Please don't get angry! I'm sorry!" Singapore had a panicked edge to his voice and I couldn't help but let out a small chuckle. His eyes widened and he knelt on the ground, apologising furiously.

"Hey hey, stop I'm not angry," I struggled to stop him, fighting back the nausea that had crept up on me. He looked up, eyes wide. "Really?" he asked breathlessly. I nodded and asked him to sit back down properly. He rose to his feet shakily and slumped in his seat.

We remained silent for a while more as I massaged my temples. The memory was still fresh in my mind and I was slightly terrified at how realistic the flashback was. The pain I experienced in the memory was starting to develop into a headache and I let out a soft groan.

"Can you...can you explain your...the voices thing please?" Singapore asked me after a while. I raised an eyebrow as he murmured, "I need something else to focus on and...and I think you also need to tell someone so...you don't have to if you don't want to of course!" he told me hurriedly. I shook my head, reassuring him I was fine with talking about it.

How do I go about explaining it? "We appeared shortly after your father's ritual. East appeared first, then me. You were in too much pain to hear us clearly so to you and then the repression spell occurred. So to you, we only appeared after the repression spell. And it was a good thing it was performed because *someone* was starting to become a demon," West explained, not hiding the disdain in her tone. I repeated her words to Singapore who seemed to be doing better. He was shivering still but at least he had stopped crying. There was still some redness around his eyes but other than that he could have passed off as someone who was cold. Only we were in the desert.

"That...repression spell? What is that supposed to mean? What else was repressed? Wasn't it just your memories?" he questioned. I shrugged helplessly, still trying to wrap my head around the whole thing. Suddenly East spoke up.

"Your Oma assumed your father's little ritual to place Apophis within you failed and that all the pain you were having was trauma. The man however, knew the ritual had succeeded and that was why he suggested a repression spell. Not only did he wipe your memories of the incident, hiding it deep in your mind, he also repressed Apophis's power and hold over you. Because of it, I was saved from becoming Apophis fully but I still share his traits. The *real* Apophis soul is still hidden within you but the leader's actions have made you more vulnerable to becoming its vessel. If it weren't for West and Poland..." he trailed off and for the first time, I heard fear in his voice. *Is it possible he doesn't want to become Apophis?* If

East heard my thoughts, he sure didn't show it.

I repeated East's explanation to Singapore who nodded slowly. "So these two are like...guards?" he tilted his head, rubbing his eyes. I nodded a small smile on my face and replied, "I suppose so." He opened his mouth in a silent 'oh' before looking back down. A comfortable silence descended upon us and I looked out of the window, noting the sun was beginning its slow descent down to the horizon. We'd probably reach before sundown however. Which was better I suppose since the fringes of the Kingdom of Winter always had forests which were hard to navigate in the night.

"Do you understand things now?" West asked me.

Somewhat. I need time to process but I have two questions. What did you mean by taking over? And what promise did you and East make?

Silence. I sighed softly, not surprised at the lack of reply. However after a while, East spoke, "I found out I could take over your body the night after the ritual. I was thrilled. It meant I could fulfil my purpose and I *did* take over you but something stopped me. That *something* was West. And that was the first time I met her."

"I begged him not to and it started out fights. When Apophis was finally repressed, we made an agreement. None of us were to take over your body. We couldn't risk it. I may not hold anything of magical importance but I was afraid once I got used to having a body I might not want to ever give it back to you. I couldn't do that to you. We also decided to try our best to guide you. In a way once we realised you had little parental...guidance we wanted to try our best to help you. It was...I guess it was our way of trying to be helpful and trying to feel...human I suppose. We didn't like how we were created to oppose one another and how you were being used as a vessel so...we did what we thought was best."

So you weren't arguing all the time? Being bitches and giving me headaches?

"That wasn't intentional. And mind you, we are very cordial with one another when not present in your conscious mind," East sniffed, "I just have a reputation to maintain."

"As do I," West laughed.

I reeled at the information, surprised to learn the truth. It never occurred to me that East and West–in their own way–were trying to help me. I'd always treated them as nuisances–pests–never as parental figures. *I...thank you.*

"You're welcome. Now go talk to the boy," West told me.

"I think you mean twerp," East snorted.

The two began to bicker but their voices were getting fainter and fainter. I smiled to myself before touching the Singaporean's shoulder. He looked at me, eyebrows raised. I noticed his eyes were shining and couldn't help but ask, "Are you okay?"

Translations:*Blödes Stück Scheiße.* --Stupid piece of shit.

A/N: I'm gonna be honest, I don't like this chapter. Something isn't quite right about my writing... And that's okay because I'm gonna re-write this whole thing when I'm done with it >:D

But yea, lemme know what you think about the chapter, what are parts you like, don't like/find unclear/lengthy all that sorts. I NEED FEEDBACK (don't feel forced to comment lmao)

Anywaysssssssssss, next up is Singapore's trauma dumping and my chance to flex the history I read for the country hehe.

I kinda wanna redo my cover soon so maybe it'll be something I'll consider for the 10k special thingy. Also, I wanna hear your thoughts. Possible Christmas special or no? On another note, have this half completed short story about France and Britain's meeting:

Royalty: UK and France's meeting

The prince sighed, looking out at the decorated ballroom with mild interest. It was a celebration to celebrate his graduation from the prestigious Pangea Preparatory Academy. Sitting precariously on the railings of the overlooking balcony, he kicked his legs back and forth. The guests roamed about, the tinkle of china cups and plates

filling the room as music played softly in the background. His parents sat on their throne, wide smiles on their faces as they watched their guests.

This is so boring. He made a face as he pulled at the collar of his "uniform". It was like a noose strangling him and he could hardly breathe. "Bloody 'ell, who on earth designed this?" he hissed. Suddenly, there was a rustle of fabric. His eyes widened as he nearly fell off the railing. Turning his head, he saw a silver of fabric in the darkness.

"Who's there?" he asked, hopping off the railing and onto the ground.

"*Oh super, c'est l'idiot britannique*!"

His eyebrow raised as he replied back, "France? You do know I can speak French right?" From the shadows, emerged a young lady. Her hair was tied into an exquisite french braid coiled around her head like a crown. She wore a white silk dress, with gold floral patterns on one side of the dress. A silk, translucent shawl was wrapped around her. She sneered contemptuously at the English prince as she asked, "What is the Prince of Britannia doing here? Aren't you supposed to be down there playing host? Why, don't tell me you're running away from your duties *again*."

"Hah, you're one to speak. Aren't you here to network on behalf of your father?" he snarked, "What happened to that?"

"I'm done with it," she smirked, gliding over to him, "Unlike you, I *don't* run away from my duties."

The English prince huffed as he turned away. France had a point–as always. Worse still was that she was right–again–something that was a sore point with Britain.

"I just needed a breather. Talking to these people can be very tiring," he sniffed trying to get back some of his dignity. France laughed as she joined him, watching the guests. "I suppose you have a point," she answered. A calm quiet overtook the two as they continued to observe the people milling about.

"You know, I'm surprised you aren't making another snarky remark," he snickered quietly to himself, "Normally you like jibing at everything I do."

"Perhaps I just wanted to give you a break," France answered mysteriously.

Britain shook his head as they fell silent once more. *This is nice. Not fighting with one another.* "I could get used to this," he muttered and France looked at him in confusion.

"Used to what? Running away?"

Britain rolled his eyes and shook his head, "I mean both of us not fighting each other."

"Ah...right," she answered before staring out at the crowd. The guests were engaging in a waltz and Britain observed his parents dancing along to the tune. They looked happy–content even–as his father guided his mother gently. "Britain, your coronation is coming soon, right?" France suddenly asked. Britain froze, taken aback by the question. "Why do you want to know? Thinking about sabotaging it?" he quipped, earning a light smack to his shoulder by the French princess.

"You stupid...never mind that. How do you feel about it? Y'know finally putting most of those lessons at the darn academy to use."

Britain contemplated, rubbing his chin as he continued to watch the dance. After a while, he looked back at France. "Can I admit something?" he whispered, causing her to raise an eyebrow at him. She nodded, eager to find out what he wanted to tell her.

"I'm scared."

France bursted into laughter, tears pricking the corner of her eyes. Britain stared, hurt etched into his facial features although he tried to keep a neutral face.

And this meme I created:

[image]

I am the first row lmao ;-; I do censor sometimes but it's like an on and off thing. I'm trying to quit swearing T-T

Anyways, bye!

I wish I could forget

[image]

Singapore forced a smile onto his face, nodding. "Yea, I just have a lot to process. I mean it's crazy isn't it? Having those voices in your head must be annoying sometimes," I noticed him trying to change the topic and frowned. He winced and asked, "Am I that bad at changing the subject?"

"Yea," was all I could reply. He sighed, running a hand through his hair. He looked unwilling to talk about his little meltdown earlier and while I didn't want to push him, I was also very curious why he acted that way. He looked at me through hooded eyes and asked, "You want to know why I panicked earlier right?"

I nodded but reassured him that he didn't need to if he was uncomfortable. He shook his head, running his hand through his hair once more. It seemed to be a nervous habit. "It's just...when you said *pain* I...It just reminded me of y'know," he shrugged, miming a stabbing motion. I immediately got what he meant and rubbed his back reassuringly. Swallowing, he continued, "I mean...I don't know why I reacted so strongly to it– I mean I still functioned so I guess that's an improvement from last time when I panicked. But when I slapped you and you stared at me I...it just reminded me of one time I...I kind–not kind of that is–I... IslappedJEandhewasreallyangryandpunishedmeandMalafterthat."

It took me a moment to process all that considering how fast Singapore spoke. When I did my face paled. "Oh Singapore," I didn't know what else to say, stunned at how J.E could have harmed such a young child. I had always seen him as someone who had held high value in morals which made me respect him a lot. Yet, it turned out I was wrong. *He's just like my father. Cruel and cold.*

"If I may ask...how did he punish you and your brother?" I inquired. Singapore gulped and I immediately said, "You don't need to tell me if you don't want to. I'm sorry for asking. It was out of line."

"No no no, it's okay. I...I was just caught off guard that's all!" I could see the panic in Singapore's eyes and regretted asking him so soon. *Idiot.* We sat in an awkward silence and I almost missed the bickering voices of East and West that would often fill in the silence. *Almost.* Singapore fiddled with the cuff of his sleeve, biting his cheek. I was about to blurt out something stupid when he spoke up.

"You asked how J.E punished us. Well for starters, when I accidentally slapped him when I was struggling against him during his... anger session. I...I didn't mean and Malaysia took a lot of the beatings since he didn't want me to get hurt. That day was particularly bad for Mal..."

~

Malaysia groaned as J.E pressed him against the cold concrete ground. J.E's boot dug into Malaysia's back and Singapore looked on from his forced crouched position, eyes wide and glistening with tears. "Still going to pretend to be strong, little boy?" J.E asked. Malaysia's face was coated in grime and he had several cuts all over his malnourished body.

"Get...off...me!" Malaysia gritted out, struggling. J.E gripped his head by the hair and he hissed in pain. "Perhaps if I were to torture you some more, then maybe you'll finally listen to me!" J.E snarled, slamming Malaysia's head onto the concrete surface. Singapore let out a shrill shriek earning a glare from him. Malaysia groaned softly in pain, disoriented. "Fucking piece of shit," J.E whipped out his knife, walking over to the Singaporean who had fallen to the ground, eyes wide in terror. A puddle of yellow surrounded him.

"Please...I'm sorry. I'm sorry Sir. I'm sorry," he babbled, as J.E kneeled in front of him before promptly wrinkling his nose. Grabbing him by his chin, J.E smiled. It chilled Singapore to the bone. "Did someone just urinate on my floor?" he asked. Singapore's breath hitched and he struggled, flailing about as J.E held him by the chin whilst standing up.

***PIAK!** J.E's eyes widened in anger as he felt a stinging pain on his cheek.*

"You...you brat! Did you just slap me?!" he roared at a shivering

Singapore.

"I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY! PLEASE DON'T PUNISH ME SIR!" Singapore pleaded. J.E didn't listen to him, dumping him next to his brother who even in a haze of pain made sure that Singapore was still protected.

"For fucks sake just give up the tough guy act! And you! The brainy one whatever the hell your name is, goddamnit do you have to destroy my floors with your disgusting urine? Goddamnit what the hell did your father see in you two? Useless bags of shit! That's what you are!" J.E ranted, kicking the two of them. Singapore only cried harder as Malaysia tried his best to shield his younger brother. J.E wasn't about to have it, thoroughly pissed off at the two young children.

When he was finally done relieving his "pent-up anger", he carved another 8 marks into the two young children's legs. It was a "practice" he claimed to make sure the two would survive till the next day. The two knew it was nonsense. It was just another part of his torture. Singapore muffled his cries by placing his fist in his mouth but Malaysia could see the tears pooling in his eyes as J.E meticulously made the marks on his pale skin which was blemished with scars. Scars that would never disappear.

"When I come back tomorrow morning, that puddle should be gone! Drink it, clean it with your shirts, whatever! ANYTHING TO GET RID OF IT DO YOU UNDERSTAND?!" he ordered. Malaysia and Singapore nodded, terrified. Giving the siblings one last glare, he slammed the door of their cell shut.

~

"How...how could he?" my fists were clenched so tight that it was beginning to turn white. Singapore shrugged as if repeating the memory didn't seem to bother him although his pursed lips said otherwise. "He...I mean he didn't...the other kids got it worse...some even died so maybe that "ritual" actually worked!" he chuckled weakly.

I stared at him blankly, unsure if I should laugh along or shake him by the shoulders to bring reality back to him. How could he even make a joke about his torture? Noticing my expression, his smile

faded and he looked away. He looked at the ground, biting his lips as he scratched his wrist. "I'm fine now Germany. Don't worry," he muttered, "I don't want your sympathy. I've had enough of it from others."

I swallowed the lump in my throat, unsure how to reply to that. "I'm serious. What J.E did wasn't the worst. I mean we had it easy honestly compared to the others! Most of the time it was just emotional abuse. It wasn't...I mean it was still horrible but not as bad right? I don't even have that many scars. It's just like...60-ish. I heard that Phil had it really bad being forced to march for days and do labour without water or food. And he was tortured too," Singapore rambled on. He continued to ramble on, giving excuses to J.E's actions constantly saying, "It wasn't so bad" or "I might have actually deserved it" on and on. It appalled me how much damage J.E had caused to Singapore and it broke me to know that Singapore and his siblings had to go through all that.

"Stop," I whispered, placing a hand on his shoulder. Singapore trailed off, looking at me, eyes clouded. "None of what he did was right. I don't get it Singapore. Why do you keep saying it wasn't so bad? It was and–" I was cut off by him shaking his head furiously.

"Don't please," he murmured and I could feel his body shivering.

"Why not?" I couldn't help but feel anger rise within me. For some odd reason, I couldn't help but feel extremely protective about the boy in front of me and hearing his horrible mistreatment under J.E made my blood boil. It wasn't love per say (I, for the record, am straight) but I felt oddly protective towards him. *It's probably because part of me feels bad for making him come with us when he shouldn't even be here.*

"I deserved it okay! All the torture, I deserved it. J.E wasn't wrong, I was and that's that," Singapore looked on the brink of tears as he twisted out my hold. His lips were quivering and there was a pained edge to his voice. Rubbing his eyes, he turned away from me, curling up, burying his head in his hands.

I sat in my seat, slack jawed. Were those the thoughts that actually went through his head? Did he actually believe J.E's torture was

justified? "Poor thing probably internalised all the words from his abuser," West's soft voice filled my mind. I stared at my roommate for the past few months, unsure how to comfort him. I was truly out of my depth.

"Ask him why he feels he deserved the torture," West suggested.

I reached out to Singapore gently, placing a hand on his arm. He flinched and looked up before looking away again. "I'm sorry for pushing you earlier. I didn't mean to and I wasn't trying to pity you. I was...I'm sorry for imposing my views on his actions on you. I want to understand you better so can you tell me why you think you deserve the torture?" Singapore didn't respond to me, curling up even tighter. I sighed softly but understood that our conversation was over.

I hope I didn't ruin our relationship.

*

"We're here! It's time to switch!" Ukraine's voice roused me out of my light slumber. Rubbing my eyes, I stretched. Singapore was leaning against the window, eyes shut. Looking outside, I realised that we had crossed the border and were in the Kingdom of Winter. Snow fell from the grey sky and I could feel the chill creeping into the carriage. I shook Singapore gently and he opened his eyes. "We've crossed the border," I informed him, a small smile on my face. He simply nodded and went to grab his cloak. I sighed, disappointed but not surprised at his reaction.

Opening the doors of the carriage, I was hit with the bitter cold wind. Goosebumps formed on my skin and I was grateful that I was wearing a long sleeved shirt inside my cloak. We were in a forest, the trees blocking the little light we had. I couldn't help but feel a bit apprehensive and kept looking behind me, afraid to be mauled to death by wolves. When I was younger, Russia and I had gone to the woods a little way from the palace late one night. It was a huge mistake since we stumbled into wolf territory and nearly died. Luckily, Russia's father, Tsar USSR happened to be coming back from some negotiation talks with my father and spotted us. He scolded us harshly after saving us and complained about this to my

father. After that, I was never allowed alone with Russia unless with a servant from *our* side. Not that it mattered. Shortly after that last visit, war between my kingdom and the Kingdom of Winter broke out and they turned to the "allies" side.

"So just follow the map. We should be out of the forest before night. There's a nearby village that we can stop by and stay for the night. While I would love to continue our journey, the path the map is asking us to take is far too dangerous to take in the dark. And it's not safe to drive at night here anyways," Ukraine explained to me and Singapore, one finger pointed on a glowing blue line on the map. On the side, there was a small glowing gold light which I assume was the village she was talking about. I nodded and took the map from her hands. Then, she left to inform the twins. Japan shivered despite her wearing a cloak and I shot her a concerned look.

"Go into the carriage first Japan," I told her and she shook her head stubbornly, pointing to Ukraine. I rolled my eyes, tilting my head to the carriage. *Don't be stubborn. Ukraine doesn't care if you go in first*. She shook her head before grabbing a few carrots and fed them to the horses. I let out a loud sigh earning myself a glare from America.

"Ohhhh someone's getting antsy! Why can't wait for *a moment* huh? You're gonna try and murder me? Jeez, be thankful–"

"Ame that's enough," Canada glared at his brother, bowing his head slightly at me although I could see the hostility in his gaze. America rolled his eyes, raising a hand before Canada jabbed him in the ribs. "Decorum. Please," he sniffed as America winced in pain, clutching his side. He glared at his brother but Canada ignored him.

Poland and Italy were at the side and both didn't look at me as they grabbed a few supplies from their carriage. Ukraine pursed her lips but finished up her instructions before heading back towards us. She got into the carriage along with Japan and I sat in the driver's seat with Singapore.

"I'll drive first, " I offered and he nodded.

Snapping the reins, we continued our ride. The twins were behind us talking. From their tone, it sounded like an argument. I couldn't really catch what was being said unfortunately but I did hear a couple swear words. Singapore looked at the path in front of us, expression unreadable. He rubbed his hands together, bringing them to his mouth as he blew into them before crossing his arms. He didn't seem quite accustomed to the cold and kept shifting about in his seat.

"Do you want another layer?" I asked after he started curling into a ball. He shook his head but I could see redness on his fingertips. "Are you *very* sure?" I tried again but to no avail. *Why is he being so stubborn?*

"Just let him be. If he wants to freeze, let him freeze," East told me. *I can't seriously do that!* My eyes widened in alarm at the suggestion and East scoffed. "If you want to be a hero go give him your cloak then," I could hear the mocking tone in his voice. But his words made sense. I was pretty accustomed to the cold since my kingdom's winters were bitter and unrelenting. Even though the castle was cold (citing poor insulation), I was fortunate since I always had a constant fire burning in my room to keep me warm. I'd heard the horror stories from Berlin who told me that in his youth, his grandfather had passed on due to the winter cold. "His skin was as cold as ice," he'd told me. It wasn't just an isolated incident. In fact, many of our citizens were far too poor to have a constant fire going on in their homes–some didn't even have money for a fireplace–and winter in the kingdom was also known as the "Death Season". I remembered one year, the temperatures were so cold that we had over 1000 deaths in relation to the low temperatures.

But what if he thinks I'm pitying him? I glanced at Singapore who had a miserable expression on his face. He'd even pulled the cloak's hood over his head, body shaking uncontrollably. *Well screw pitying, I'm not risking him getting frostbite or hypothermia.* Holding onto the reins with one hand, I used my other to help me out of my cloak before putting it on Singapore's lap.

"What?" he asked sharply, the first words he'd spoken to me in over an hour.

"Wear it," I told him, "The last thing I need is for you to fall sick or get frostbite." I expected a retort or for him to shove the cloak back to me but surprisingly, he wore it, sighing softly at the warmth. There was silence for a while before Singapore murmured something. "Huh?" I glanced at him, slightly amused at how he'd covered himself up entirely with the extra cloak.

"I...I said thank you," Singapore repeated.

"No problem." *I'm beginning to freeze.*

The tension between us began to thaw and I let out a quiet sigh of relief. The horses' hooves crunched on the icy leaves that littered the ground as I occasionally glanced at the map which I had on my lap. We were halfway through the forest and looked like we'd be out soon. Still, I couldn't stop the pessimism that rose within me. *What if we don't get out by nightfall?* The last thing I wanted was to be attacked by wolves.

"We'll be fine. At the rate we're going, we'll be out well before dusk comes," Singapore seemed to hear my thoughts.

We rode on in silence although it would occasionally be disrupted by a whine from the horses. I felt the cold beginning to creep up on me and discreetly rubbed my hands together. I couldn't wait to reach the village. Hopefully Egypt had packed us some thicker clothing to change into.

"I'm sorry for my outburst earlier. You didn't deserve it," Singapore apology was out of the blue and it actually startled me. My grip on the reins went slack and the horses neighed loudly, swerving. I hurriedly tightened my grasp.

"Why are you apologising? You did nothing wrong. If anything I should be the one to apologise," I looked at him after we'd finally calmed down from our near death experience. He ran a hand through his messy hair, sighing in frustration. For a moment, I worried that he was going to go mum on me and debated if I should salvage the situation. "Singa–"

"I've tried so hard to listen to people. That whatever happened to

me during the war wasn't my fault and...I know that they're right but after those years, day after day hearing the same few phrases calling me useless and all they just stick y'know? And I can't unhear them," Singapore explained as he looked ahead.

"I wish I could forget everything. The fact you hardly remember your trauma–at least until now–almost makes me envious..." Singapore murmured before flushing, "That being said I'm not dismissing your bad experiences!" I waved a hand, assuring him I wasn't offended. If anything, he was completely right and I didn't blame how he felt one bit. Yet, I wasn't sure how to help him. How could I help him undo years of such thoughts? Telling him that he wasn't useless obviously wasn't going to help him.

"It's crazy how words can affect us so much huh?" I blurted out, chuckling nervously. Singapore smiled sadly, nodding. Silence engulfed us as he resumed his staring contest with the scenery. I felt my teeth chattering and began shivering. Checking the map, I was glad to note that we would soon be out of the forest. The village wasn't far off and with luck, we might be out of the cold in an hour or less. *I just have to hang on for a bit longer.* I rubbed my hands again when suddenly, warmth enveloped my body.

"You can have your cloak back. I'm warmed up at last. Besides, I don't want you falling ill," Singapore's eyes twinkled and I thanked him. Shrugging on the cloak, I sighed at the warmth it provided. The horses' steps were slowing down and I made a mental note to let them rest properly once we reached the village. They'd been dutifully driving us for days and I knew that they needed their rest soon.

"Germany," Singapore nudged me and I glanced at him out of the corner of my eye. I hummed softly to show I was listening. There was a soft rustle of fabric and then, a sigh. "Can you promise not to tell the others about this please? Especially Japan," he asked.

"Of course," I reassured him. He relaxed, a grateful look on his face. "And also...I know I can't make you change your mindset but I hope you know that I'm really grateful to you. You're the first person who isn't scared of me and it means a lot," I told him before I lost my nerve. There was a flicker in his eyes before he hugged me. Caught

off guard, I nearly lost my grip on the reins again. Luckily for us, I managed to regain hold of them before we could crash.

"Thank you," he whispered. I smiled, patting his head awkwardly. I felt warm and tingly all over and it wasn't unpleasant. I wasn't hugged much so it was always nice when I was. At least until I heard West squealing. I blushed, telling her to shut up. Eventually, East managed to get her to quieten down but I could hear the amusement in his voice as he did so. *Jeez...* Releasing me, I noticed a gleam in Singapore's eyes. However it disappeared as fast as it came. Smiles warm on our lips, the rest of our journey was quiet.

*

"We're here!" I announced as our carriage rolled to a stop. The village was dark and I assumed it was normal considering that many of the citizens were too broke to afford lighting up oil lamps. I did find it strange that none of the houses had lights. Normally–at least from my short stay in the Kingdom of Winter–there would be at least one house (typically the village leader or the equivalent) whose house would be open for all villagers to come in and get some warmth. Usually the citizens would gather around a huge fire in the living room of the house (which was also the reason why there was always one home in the village which was larger than the rest) and chat until they'd finally warmed up enough to go home. I felt uneasy but chalked it up to the long hours of me driving. *There's nothing to worry about.*

Singapore stretched his arms as Japan and Ukraine carefully got out of the carriage. Poland, Italy and the twins walked over. I noticed a dagger strapped to Poland's side and felt my stomach twist.

"Something's not right," Ukraine announced. Swivelling our heads towards her, America inquired, "What do you mean? Did Germany lead us to the wrong place?"

"I followed the map for your information," I muttered, crossing my arms. *Does he seriously need to keep making snide jabs at me?* America smiled sweetly, about to say something but Ukraine quickly glared at him. *Shut up.*

Surveying the area, she shook her head. "It's too dark here..." she murmured, "It shouldn't be this dark...the village has been accounted for. Where are the villagers?" There was an agitated tone to her voice as she surveyed our surroundings. "Let's go take a look. Maybe the villagers are sleeping? I heard that they do that in the winter," Canada suggested casually but you could still hear the unease in his voice. Ukraine shook her head, taking a step back towards the carriage.

"We should go. I'm sorry but I don't have a good feeling about this," she told us.

"Oh come on, let's just take a quick look! I'm tired and like you said, driving at night isn't safe. There's nothing to be afraid of," America's loud voice rang out as he walked forward, one hand alight with fire. One by one we trailed after him and Ukraine eventually gave up trying to stop us.

We made it into the centre of the village where a statue of Tsar USSR was. I was beside Ukraine who wrinkled her nose at her father's statue. She mouthed something but I didn't know what it was. Most likely some curses though judging by the expression on her face. "See, there's nothing to worry about," America laughed. We all relaxed but I could still see the tension in Ukraine's body.

"I'm telling you. Something *is* wrong. We sho–"

FWOOMP!

We raised our hands to our face, blinded by a startling blue light. My face paled, instantly knowing we were in deep shit. There was only *one* royal army that used blue fire. Judging by Ukraine, Japan and Italy's horrified expressions I knew they'd already had it figured out.

"Fuck," Ukraine swore uncharacterisitically.

"Language Printsessa Ukraine," a heavy set man emerged from the shadows. He was Marshal of the Kingdom of Winter, Moscow. A gasp slipped from my lips as my body shook uncontrollably. *Oh my god we're dead.*

A/N: Y'all do not know how much I am dying to write Russia's PoV right now. >:(But I still have like 1-2 more chapters before I finally can write his PoV properly *sobbing noises* Side note, writing the final bit of this chapter while playing the instrumental of Raya and the Last Dragon is a total mood because the music totally suits the mood when the gang enters the village.

And yes, Marshal is the (de facto) highest rank in the Soviet Army (It's funny how I made Soviet be a king when the USSR was designed to say NO to monarch) although the "real" highest rank was Generalissimus which was only awarded to one man. Joseph Stalin. And this was after WW2 btw. Just a little bit of history for y'all :)

This chapter is a little longer than usual to compensate my soon-to-be lack of activity although I am trying my best to get another chapter on schedule for sometime next week. We'll see.

Also, we're almost done with Part 2.2 of Part 2 and this also means you've read around *101,219 ±** **words from the story already (excluding my long A/Ns, 1K Q&A, Random things in general) It also means this book is going to enter it's final arc aka Convergence! Hehe, Germany's gonna arrive homeeeeeeeeeee~**
(This 101,219± is based of my A03 page where I hardly yap since my main audience is here lmao)
(Also what sort of drugs am I on to write this much TnT-- I can't believe it's gonna be a whole ass year since I posted the very first chapter ;-; I'm legit praying that I finish this story by March 2025 so I can move to my next book.)

At this point, I'm wondering how many of y'all are seriously pissed off at America in this story. Cause I am and it's so ironic since I'm writing him lolllll. But he has reasons (I guess)

Also, here's a little poem that I made like eons ago

For I love you:

I love you
I love you
I love you

Please don't ever go away
Please come back again like Sunshine on a warm summer day
Like Winter who haunts me every December
Or like Fall's beautiful leaves
Or Spring's lovely flowers

Please don't go away
I love you
I love you
I love you

Please God, don't take the twinkles in their eyes away
Or the spring in their steps
Or the liveliness in their voice
Please God, don't take my sunshine away

I love them
I love them
I love them
I love them so hard it hurts

When they aren't with me I grieve
My world turns grey like the rain clouds
The flowers that once bloomed in my heart
Wither and die

And they fall...
Fall...
Fall...
Fall...

Down the cracks into the abyss
Never to be seen again
I drown in my misery and grief
My anger and fear

So please, let them live another day

Another week
Another month
Another year

Not in misery
Nor in pain
But let them stay happy
Never let their smile wither away.

For I love you
You are my sunshine
Please remain my sunshine
Don't ever let those grey clouds in your way

I find it cheesy but eh, I was never a poetry goddess lmao.

Okay, I've officially run dry of questions atp lmao but here's a few memes (From pinterest) because I think this whole chapter is like super depressing in general. ALSO LIKE CAN I JUST SAY I WAS LITERALLY DECIDING BETWEEN MOSCOW AND ST. PETERSBURG FOR THE MARSHAL OF THE KOD BECAUSE LIKE BOTH WERE SO GOOOOOOOOOOOOD AS CHOICESSSSSS >:(In the end I went with Moscow since it was the capital and like St. Petersburg is currently more like Russia's cultural area soooooooo yea.

[image]

(This is mine lol)

[image]

[image]

How I feel as of today.

[image]

[image]

[image]

[image]

Okie bye y'alls!

Arrested

[image]

The burly man appeared from the shadows and I gasped, hands flying to my mouth. Around us, soldiers dressed in armour surrounded us, cutting off any exit points we could have used. My hands curled around the hilt of the dagger strapped to my thigh, body tense. Ukraine looked scared, her hands quivering as she spoke, "What do you want Moscow?" My heart skipped a beat.

I had heard this name a long time ago when I was a child. Before the war between the Kingdom of Darkness and Winter, USSR had worked with the bastard. During one visit, I recalled them stopping outside my cell as TR talked about me like I was an exhibit. "He'll do fine in your court, don't you think? He's in a very good condition to serve you as your servant or maybe a trophy child, I know how much you love those." he grinned, his (too shiny) teeth glinting in the low light. USSR grunted, eyeing me with contempt. Behind him was a man whose face I could not see because he was wearing a helmet. I did notice his exceptionally dark red skin along with a crest of a horse and knight on his breastplate. "*Как ты думаешь, Москва?*" he'd asked. Moscow grunted, shaking his head, muttering something. Whatever it was, it prevented me from being sent over to USSR's court and in the end, I heard that another servant's daughter was taken. If I wasn't wrong maybe it was Lithuania? I wasn't clear on the details. What I *did* know was that shortly after that, the war between the kingdoms began and all communication between the bastard and his "best friend" was cut off.

Moscow eyed us, before his gaze landed on me. "Ah, I remember you. The scrawny one," his voice was deep and hurt my ears. My knees shook but I tried my best not to show my fear. America glared, pushing me behind him (much to my irritation. I could take care of myself!) as he snarled. Ukraine shot us a warning look before turning back to Moscow.

"Did Father send you?" she asked, voice stiff. Moscow smirked as if saying, *Guess*. Ukraine only glared in response, jaw tight. "And let's see who else did you bring along...wait it can't be you...the traitor's son!" he glared furiously at Germany whose eyes were wide in fear. I saw Japan move nearer to Germany, one hand on his shoulder. She murmured something to him which only made him paler. The poor guy looked ready to faint. *Wait poor guy? Please, he just tried to murder me! Get a hold of yourself Poland!*

"Let us go, we have important business," America told Moscow.

"Important business? What? Trying to save that *damn* kingdom from that monster? I'd say you're wasting your time. Letting it go to ruin is better," he chuckled. Germany looked up from the ground, eyes ablaze. "What. Did. You. *Just.* Say?" Germany gritted out.

"Why? Can't listen properly? I. Said. You're. Wasting. Your. Time," Moscow enunciated each word as if he were speaking to a child, his horrid grin growing wider and wider. Now, I know first hand an angry German is someone you never want to face. Moscow...he probably didn't. With an animalistic growl, Germany leapt onto Moscow, eyes wide, a ball of shadows in one hand. "Say that again, I dare you!" he snarled. The soldiers grasped the hilt of their swords, moving into a fighting stance. My grip on my dagger tightened, Ukraine's eyes darting around in panic. Italy and Canada looked nervous while Singapore, America and Japan tensed up. I could see the calculative gleam in America's eyes as he surveyed the soldiers. "Run when I tell you to," he whispered and I shook my head furiously. "Absolutely not!" I hissed back, "I can fend for myself!" America was about to reply when Moscow roared, slamming Germany down into the dirt. He let out a low groan, laying on the ground limply.

"Weakling. Just like that *Сволочь*," Moscow scoffed, dusting off his hands before turning towards us, "Now now children play nice. Or I might just..." He cracked his knuckles and I heard a gulp coming from Ukraine. I could understand her fear. When we first became friends, I remembered she told me that the higher-up staff (like Moscow) were actually allowed to "discipline" the royal children and many times, it was the "trophy children" who bore the brunt of this "discipline". Since they weren't the Tsar's biological children

and more like...well quite literally trophies, they were often objectified and subjected to quite a bit of torture. It wasn't anything that would leave physical marks on them since the Tsar hated his trop–children I mean–being disfigured. But one time, supposedly (I cannot say this is true as a royal especially since this was told to me by Ukraine who had distanced herself with the royals of her kingdom), Moscow when disciplining Belarus, had accidentally caused a major injury to her face causing her to wear a scarf to hide it.

"Don't hurt them," he rasped as a soldier yanked him up by the scruff of his neck. Blood was running down the side of his head and his glasses were cracked. He looked like he was barely hanging onto consciousness, head lolling forward. Moscow rolled his eyes and whipped out a dagger. Pointing it at Germany's neck, he smiled, "And how will you stop me? We all know you're *completely* incapable of handling your ability. Why, we've heard news how you've harmed...what's the scrawny's name again? The Light Kingdom's prince...Poland!" he snapped his fingers and I felt a shiver go down my spine, "Yes him...you harmed him all because you can't control your powers. Are you really willing to lose control and harm *everyone* here? My...wouldn't it be funny if we start another war because of it?"

"Oh shut up Mousie or whatever your name is! I don't care what rank you are, let us go now! You can keep Germany but let the rest of us go!" America snapped before Japan smacked his head. "Don't say that! We have to bring him along!" she scolded him. He scoffed and added, "You can keep Japan too. And...So, no wait...Singapore right. You can keep him too." I heard a horrified gasp, most likely Singapore and even though I *did* want to leave Germany behind, I felt America was going too far now by attacking the others. I was going to warn him to tone down when Moscow chuckled.

He said something to his soldiers in another language which made them laugh. Ukraine's fists balled up as she kept her head low. "America, please stop now. Don't fight with Moscow and just listen to him," she murmured. Everyone's heads whipped around as we stared at her. "You can't seriously be giving up!" Canada exclaimed, uncharacteristically angry. *Ukraine what are you doing?* She looked

away, the blue fire casting a dark shadow over her face.

"Ukraine is absolutely right. You kids aren't in any position to fight and negotiate with me or my soldiers. So listen to me and maybe you can have a *bit* of your dignity intact," Moscow said as he brought the dagger closer to Germany's throat, lifting Germany's lolling head to face him, "Unlike this sorry excuse of a prince. Pathetic." He spat on the ground as all the soldiers around us laughed. I hated it. It reminded me all too well of my time under TR, the horrid laughter I had to hear all day long. I couldn't believe that there were men who could derive such happiness or pleasure from inflicting pain on others. How could they sleep at night knowing they ruined someone?

The answer to my question?

A Sadist. Moscow, TR and all the soldiers who laughed at me and my friends' pain were sadists.

We all looked at one another, not sure what to do. *I'm not going down without a fight,* America's determined gaze told us. I knew the rest of us felt the same but it was hard to tell what Ukraine and Singapore felt. Ukraine's face was in the shadows, posture slumped. Singapore's expressionless face didn't offer much insight into his thoughts either.

A yawn came out of Moscow's mouth as he stretched his back. "Now as much as I would *love* to watch this little show of yours, I do have orders from the Tsar to bring you and your friends to the Winter Palace," he took a paper from one of the soldiers. "For entering the Kingdom of Winter without a permit and via an illegal route, you shall be arrested for trespassing and brought to Tsar USSR for a trial. Should you be found guilty, you will be imprisoned in the royal dungeons," my heart dropped and I felt my chest become heavy. *Imprisoned? Dungeons?*

"For struggling, you may also be confined to solitary confinement and may be restrained if you pose a threat to our staff," he looked at America, "So I recommended just complying unless you favour being alone. Of course for some it does bring back some memories but what must be done must be done in order to ensure safety."

America gritted his teeth but didn't make any movement which was surprising. Moscow smiled softly (which was rather terrifying) as he nodded. "Good kids," he murmured as soldiers walked out of the shadows, grabbing all of us, forcing our hands behind our backs. The one holding Germany simply threw him over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. I heard a click and felt my blood turn to ice. All of a sudden, I felt like there was a gaping hole in my chest, aching like hell.

"Ability restrictors. We can't have you using your abilities to run away now can we? Even if they are rather *useless*," Moscow sneered looking at Canada who looked like someone just crushed his heart. Which wasn't quite far off. I knew Canada (though he hardly mentioned it) felt like his abilities were subpar compared to the rest of us. All he could do was talk to animals and plants like some fairytale princess and didn't feel like he was powerful especially when compared to his family. America had fire abilities, Queen France had the ability to manipulate water, King Britain had the ability to manipulate land, New Zealand had the ability to shapeshift into animals and Australia, who was 9 years old, was already expected to have a great ability. It didn't help that he was the first-born and therefore was expected to be all powerful. Though America and him were of the same age, he was the elder twin, born 3 days prior (Queen France had a long birthing process because *someone* was very stubborn when coming out. I'm looking at you America).

"I do hope you'll cooperate. I'd *hate* to ruin any of your faces. Especially the Eastern Pangean's ones. Those are the prettiest of them all," Moscow flashed a charming smile in the direction of Japan and Singapore. Singapore's eyes twitched while Japan looked disgusted. "このまま君に見せ続けるくらいなら、僕の顔を台無しにした方がいいよ," she muttered before the soldier in charge of her, yanked her shoulder roughly. She glared but fell silent once more.

"Feisty aren't you? How admirable. I quite like it when my prisoners have some resistance against us but like I said, don't overdo it or my soldiers might just have to use brutal force on you," Moscow smirked before ordering his soldiers to lead us to the carriages.

"*Лошадей оставьте, судя по породе, они, вероятно, принадлежат*

королеве Песочного королевства. Мы отправим их ей обратно, как только все будет обработано. И вагоны. Мы не хотим никаких проблем с ней," Moscow continued as two other soldiers (just how many were there?) walked out of the shadows to take the horses and carriages. The horses whined loudly, refusing to comply until the soldiers placed collars on them. The horses immediately quietened, bowing their heads. I didn't get to see more as the soldier restraining me shoved me forward to make me walk. We continued to walk for a long time until we reached the end of the village where I saw a carriage with steel bars all over it. There were some words written in what I assumed to be Russian and the kingdom's crest on it.

"In," the soldier said gruffly as he grabbed me by the back of my neck before chucking me into the carriage. I fell onto the ground and barely had time to manoeuvre myself away from becoming Poland the Pancake as Italy fell next to me. Singapore and Canada followed, then America and Japan. Germany was the last one and the doors slammed shut as blinds were pulled in front of the windows, locking us in almost pure darkness save for the faint glow of the lanterns hanging outside the carriage. I heard some orders before the carriage-jail jerked roughly. We all let out a collective, "woah" before we finally managed to get ourselves to sit properly. Germany was limp on the ground still but Japan and Singapore managed to get him to sit up. After a bit of cajoling, Singapore managed to switch with America and got Germany to rest his head against his. Even in the dim light, I could tell the worry on his face when he took a good look at Germany's condition.

"Does anyone have some extra cloth to stop the bleeding on his head?" Japan asked softly.

Silence.

She sighed softly before grabbing her cloak. There was a ripping sound and then in Japan's hand was a strip of cloth which she tied around Germany's head. He made a low groan but didn't wake up. I felt a stab of sympathy for him but reminded myself that he deserved it. Sort of.

A tense atmosphere filled the carriage. America and Italy eyed

Germany warily as if he'd wake up any second and come and attack us. I internally rolled my eyes, knowing well enough that he was out cold completely–whether it was from the blow to his head or the blood loss, I wasn't sure. But that also didn't stop me from taking peeks at him from time to time.

As the adrenaline in my veins faded, I found myself becoming increasingly uncomfortable. The carriage-jail reminded me all too much of my time during the war. The dimness of it reminded me of the cell I was kept in, the scent of iron and the sweat alongside the bitter cold. A shiver wracked my body and I curled up within myself. From my angle, I could also see Singapore shaking though I wasn't sure if it was from the cold or something else. Part of me wanted to comfort him but another part–the petty and mean side–felt that he needed to deal with it himself. After all, he was the one wanting to side with Germany. *Fucking betrayer. I thought he'd understand me better.*

You should stop this. You goddamn know that what Germany did back there was right. To some extent at least. And you nearly getting killed was also your own fault. If you hadn't tried to provoke the guy, none of this would have happened. He's not right but neither are you. I shook my head, cursing under my breath. I refused to acknowledge it even though I knew what my conscience had said was completely correct. Yet a small part of me wanted to apologise to him but I stuffed it away, concentrating on my anger. It helped me calm down a little, taking my mind off the stupid predicament we were in. In my mind, I created list after list about why I hated Germany and his entire family.

One, he's an asshole, only following rules like some goody two shoes.

Two, he has no personality at all.

Three, he thinks he's correct and that we're beneath him.

Four, he's a fucking loner and such a teacher's pet. Ugh I can't stand it at all!

Five–

I had just started another list when the doors to the carriage opened. Bright blue light filled the space and I winced as a cacophony of voices filled my ears. *How far were we from the palace even? The trip took less time than expected.* I wondered if the Kingdom of Winter was using portals or something to facilitate faster transport. I wouldn't have been surprised considering the kingdom was actually a pioneer in technological advancement. Unfortunately, they kept it all to themselves and most of the technology was used in the capital and was only for the wealthy. *Selfish assholes.*

One by one, we were hauled out of the carriage. Germany was once more carried like a sack of potatoes on one of the soldiers' shoulders. He had regained semi-consciousness at some point but anyone could tell he was still out of it. If I had to guess, he probably had a concussion or something. The sky was still dark but around us all were torches burning with blue fire. The soldiers led us under a huge arch as we entered a building. I saw a flash of blue and yellow but nothing else as we rounded the corner. *Ukraine?* Moscow walked behind us, footsteps echoing in the hallway. They were decorated ornately, pictures painted on the ceiling depicting the legends of the kingdom. I saw several portraits of past leaders and their family as well as paintings. *Where on earth did they get this many?* It wasn't anything surprising since the castle I lived in was also the same in a sense but we certainly didn't have that many paintings since many had been pillaged during the 2nd Great War. In fact, I swore that if I'd brought a catalogue of all the paintings we used to have I could probably find at least half of them here.

We finally stopped in front of an ornate golden door. It was decorated with eagles and onion shaped roof buildings as well as a large sun at the very top. Two soldiers at the door saluted Moscow and he nodded. "We'll be meeting the Tsar now so be on your best behaviour," he told us as if we were children. I hated it. "But first, we have to meet a special someone," he smiled, "Printsessa of Fall, Ukraine. Please come join us."

I will admit that I gasped when I saw my friend. She looked completely different, her hair braided and coiled up on her head and was dressed in a green dress with silver accents. A tiara was

placed on her head, the jewels glinting in the light. Her face had a hint of make-up and her face was stony. However, the anguish in her eyes told a different story. *I'm sorry*, they seemed to convey. She had two golden bracelets on her wrists which were no doubt ability restrictors.

"Now that everyone is here, we can enter. Remember what I said!" Moscow reminded us as the doors to the throne room opened and we were forced to walk in.

Translations:

Как ты думаешь, Москва?-- What do you think, Moscow?

Сволочь-- Bastard

君に見せてやるくらいなら、僕の顔を台無しにした方がいいよ,-- I'd rather ruin my face then let you see it

Лошадей оставьте, судя по породе, они, вероятно, принадлежат королеве Песочного королевства. Мы отправим их ей обратно, как только все будет обработано. И вагоны. Мы не хотим никаких проблем с ней,-- Keep the horses, judging by the breed, they probably belong to the Queen of the Sand Kingdom. We will send them back to her as soon as everything is processed. And carriages. We don't want any problems with her.

A/N: *shuffles in* Hiiiiiii! Long time no see haha 😂 I've got some amazing news for y'all!

BOUND BY DESTINY HAS HIT 10K!!!! THANK YOU SO MUCH TO EVERYONEEEEEEEE Y'ALL ARE AMAZING AND THIS IS JUST AHHHH SUCH A DREAMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM~

More info on the Q&A in the next chapter which is about to be uploaded after this! If y'all want other events (eg. drawing contest) do put them down in the comments :D

Y'know the Tsar's palace (Winter Palace) is based off the actual one in Russia and goddamn is there a lot of gold in that

structure ;-; I guess it's expected since they were rich and all. I wanna visit the place one day (honestly wanna visit all the places I referenced in this book lol) but travel restrictions and all makes it hard TnT :(

Not me realising this as I wrote the chapter but Germany's glasses finally make a (re?)appearance and then get broken hahahahahahahahahaha 😂 Don't worry, there'll be some way his glasses will be okay again.

Also, I'm drawing my artwork for Christmas and I was close to rage quitting it--

[image]

You will see the work probably by next week... I swear I need to finish it *groaning*

I don't have much to say right now so have a meme I found on Pinterest which explains my nocturnal tendencies

[image]

Byeeee and thank you so much for the 10K!!!

Christmas Special

[image]

(3rd person)
(Not entirely canon. Just imagine Germany after healing Poland, no big bad monster appeared. To my SK fans (both from SK and not), I'm really sorry but he doesn't appear here cause erm...I didn't draw him in the artwork and I kinda based it off that.)

Snow fell from the sky, coating the ground in soft white powder. Germany, who had wrapped his blanket around himself, looked out of his window, admiring the scenery. He had an open book in his lap and a steaming mug of coffee on his bedside table. It was the perfect day and nothing could ru–

"GERMANYYYYYYY!!!" Italy's excited voice broke the calm as he nearly tore the room's door off the hinges. He was dressed in a navy blue jacket paired with a grey turtleneck and black pants. A flash of irritation crossed Germany's face as he snapped, "Have you never heard of knocking?!" Raising his hands in mock surrender, Italy apologised sheepishly. Germany sighed, shaking his head as he closed the book.

"What brings you here Italy?" he asked, resigned. *Please don't be something about socialisation.*

"Me and the others were thinking of going to the village to spend the day, do you wanna join? Singapore's coming since Poland invited him! We're gonna do a little secret gift exchange as well!" Italy was bouncing from foot to foot, a wide smile on his face. Germany wondered if Italy had taken pure sugar and adrenaline for breakfast that morning or if he was normally that energetic.

Germany sighed, unwilling to leave the comfort of his bed. It was so warm and going out meant getting cold and he already had a plan on how to spend Christmas–Eve and– "Pleaseeeeeee? We haven't hung out like *forever!*" Italy clasped his hands, making puppy eyes

at his friend. Germany looked at him, nonplussed and replied, "We literally hung out *2 days* ago."

"And then you rushed off to the library! Come on, pleaseeeeee? I promise I won't annoy you," Italy tugged on the German's arm.

Germany groaned, knowing Italy was right. Still...this was *far* too impromptu for his liking. "Come on, just go. You need to socialise a little," West whispered in his mind. "Even if it's with little squirts," East added (unhelpfully). After a little internal warring with himself and some more puppy eyes from Italy, he finally relented and nodded.

Italy grinned and clapped his hands in excitement. "Meet us at the Portal Room at 12pm!" he said before leaving. A quick check of the time informed Germany he had about 30 minutes before he had to leave. Great, that left him enough time to change and walk there and maybe if he was fast, have a quick bemoaning session.

*

Is this presentable enough? Germany looked at his reflection in the mirror, scratching his head. He had dressed himself in a cream coloured long sleeved shirt, a light brown vest and a dark green jacket paired with navy blue trousers. *Or is it over the top?* He pulled at the collar of his vest, half wondering if he should wear a scarf before deciding against it. It wasn't *that* cold. Taking one last look at himself, exhaled. *I'll be fine. This is fine.* Shouldering his satchel, he double checked he had everything he needed before leaving.

By the time he reached the portal room, everyone aside from Ukraine and Singapore was there. Much to his mortification, America, Poland and him were wearing the *exact* same colour combination. "Hey...I think I forgot something–" he started, turning to leave before America wrapped an arm around Germany, laughing. "Hey don't sweat it! Great minds think alike, right?" he beamed proudly, eyes sparkling. Germany chuckled awkwardly while internally wincing. *I don't think I agree with America about 'Great minds think alike'...*

Thankfully, Singapore and Ukraine came in at that moment. He was

dressed in a dark blue coat, dark blue scarf and grey pants. Ukraine wore an almost all brown ensemble save for her scarf which was a deep maroon. She wore a ushanka on her head and her hair was tied into a fishtail braid. "We're not late are we?" Ukraine asked.

"You're right on time!" Italy smiled as Germany silently thanked the gods for the distraction. Pulling out a small leather pouch, he handed each of them a folded slip of paper. "The name of the person you've selected is the person you're supposed to get a gift for. If you've gotten your name, we'll redo this," he explained. Fortunately, no one had gotten their names. Germany had gotten Poland and he sighed mentally. What *did* Poland like exactly? He wracked his brain but couldn't find any answers. Maybe he'd just get his roommate a book of some sort. Or a glass bowl if he really couldn't find anything.

Italy nodded to Japan who placed her hand on a book seated on a small stand. Muttering an incantation, the circle the group was in began to glow blue. The glow got brighter and brighter until everyone–minus Japan–shut their eyes, covering them with their hands or arms. When the glow faded–and everyone regained their sight–they found themselves at the entrance of the village.

Germany stared in awe at the tall silvery gates that surrounded the village. Well, a marketplace would probably have been a better word for it but many students called it a village since the structures there all resembled one and there were a handful of people that lived there. The village was on neutral ground, set up alongside the school as a means of sustainable food production for the school and to promote cross-cultural relations between the kingdoms. During the war, it served as a negotiation table and was also known as *Village de la Paix* (or Peace Village).

Entering the village, they were greeted by the warm welcome of shop owners who urged them to come and browse at their stores. "Come come! I got the finest porcelain you'll ever see!" a store owner with a distinctive upper class Silk Kingdom accent called out. "Buy our delicious mulled wine!" another store owner, probably from the Winter Kingdom, said.

"Oooh, we should try that!" America said excitedly.

"Mmm that sounds like a good idea..." Germany answered, looking at the store, excitement in his eyes.

"I didn't know you drink," Poland raised an eyebrow as Germany turned red. Before he could say anything, Japan had done it for him. "He's been drinking alcohol since he was like...14 was it? And then you got drunk the last time when you visited me because Queen Prussia let you–"

"Okay okay, no need to spill my secrets," Germany's face was completely red and he swore if Japan continued any further, he would probably die right there and then. Italy's grin wasn't helping his situation either. In an attempt to divert the conversation, he asked, "Where to next? Maybe we can come back here before we leave."

"We could split up, meet here in an hour or so? That way we can go and find our gifts," Ukraine suggested. Everyone agreed and, once they agreed on the time to meet up, split. America and Canada decided to find some eggnog while Japan and Ukraine chose to look at some clothing. Italy wandered off to god knows where and Singapore had somehow managed to disappear while everyone was talking. Germany never understood how he did it.

"Where are you going?" Poland asked, adjusting his jacket.

Germany pointed in the vague direction of his favourite bookstore. "Do you want to come along?" he offered, "It's a nice place and it's warm."

"Sure!"

Their entrance was made known by the soft tinkle the bell above the door made. A little old lady sat behind the counter, knitting a scarf. A small orange tabby cat sat on the counter, sleeping. The shelves reached the ceilings, stuffed with books of different genres. And on the ground were over a hundred more books, piled on top of one another. Germany's favourite part of the bookstore was the rolling ladders that hung on each shelf allowing him to reach the highest parts and grab his favourite books. Despite the cramped nature of the store, he found comfort in it since he'd been visiting

that place since he started his education at the academy.

Poland made a beeline towards the cat as soon as he spotted it. The old lady smiled and nodded when he asked if he could pet it. The cat purred, snuggling into his touch. Germany raised a hand in greeting before disappearing in between the bookshelves. Running a hand across the spines of the books, he tilted his head sideways to see if any titles caught his eye.

Behind his Innocence.

Gently taking the book out from its position, he skimmed through the synopsis, nodding to himself. Checking the price, he was thrilled to find that it was on an offer. He continued to browse through the store and by the time he was done, he had another 5 more books. Returning to the counter, he placed them in front of the old lady.

"Woah, that's quite a stack," Poland commented, pausing his petting. The cat meowed in protest and he immediately went back to patting it. Germany chuckled nervously as the old lady wrapped it up in brown packing paper. "Haha, I might have gone a little overboard but it's on offer so..." he rubbed the back of his neck sheepishly.

Poland smirked, shaking his head fondly. Once Germany had paid and he'd mollified the cat, they left. As they walked through the village, they passed by different shops. Before long, they had split up though they agreed to meet later at one of the other shops.

As Germany walked through, he spotted a stand selling intricately made stone photo frames. "These are handmade so none of these frames are alike! We have ruby, amber, sapphire, all types of stones really," the store owner explained, smiling.

"I'll take the amber frame," Germany said, pointing to one that he'd been admiring for sometime. As soon as he saw it, he knew that it would be the perfect gift for Poland. And it just happened to be the perfect size for the photo Poland owned. "Great choice young man! Do you want me to package it up or will you take it like this?" the owner asked.

"Wrapped, thanks," he passed her the money, "Erm, if you could write a note that would be great too!" She nodded as she grabbed a cloth from the apron she was wearing, polishing the amber frame a little before wrapping it, complete with a red ribbon.

"What do you want the note to say?" she asked, pen poised, ready to write.

"Er..." what *did* he want to say? After thinking it through, he said, "Happy holidays, thank you for being my friend and er...hope you like the gift." The owner wrote it down and showed it to Germany who nodded, thanking her. She smiled and taped the note to the packaging before requesting who it was going to.

"Poland."

She smiled, bowing slightly as she passed the wrapped gift to him. "Have a great day ahead!" she told him. Germany smiled and waved goodbye to her before disappearing into the crowd.

*

The group met back up at the mulled wine stand an hour later. Ukraine, Japan and Italy had many bags with them, most filled with clothing. Canada had a bag in hand while America had a small package. Singapore carried a bag filled with wrapped gifts which he explained were mostly for his family while Poland had a mysterious pouch in his hands.

"Singapore, are you allowed to drink?" Canada asked, looking towards him.

Singapore shook his head and Canada nodded in understanding. "7 cups of mulled wine please!" he told the person selling. He paid for it even though the others (minus America) offered to pay. Japan was the most insistent. He even bought a non-alcoholic version of the drink for Singapore who took it gratefully.

Germany took a sip of his drink, relishing the taste. He loved the sweetness of mulled wine and the warmth it provided him. (And if he had to be frank, he liked how it helped to dull the pain he

carried but the hangover that came over with it wasn't *quite* worth it.) They chatted for a bit before deciding to do the gift exchange. Getting out the gifts, Germany couldn't help but feel a little nervous that his gift wasn't going to be good enough. *Would Poland even like it? Or would he think it's useless? Maybe I should have gotten him a glass bowl instead. Does Poland need a glass bowl though?*

"We'll go in a circle starting from Japan, then Ukraine and so on and so forth," Italy explained as Japan readied her gift. Nodding, she passed it to Canada. He thanked her and unwrapped the gift. It was a bottle of maple wine. His eyes twinkled and he grinned. He couldn't wait to try it although Japan cautioned him to be careful since the alcohol content was extremely high.

Next up was Ukraine and her receiver was Italy. She had gotten him an intricately made clock which was made from a plate. The sides were made of gold and the drawings were made from silver. Italy squealed when he received it, thanking her profusely.

Germany was the final one to go. His giver had been Singapore who'd passed him a small little toolkit. "It's for you to invent stuff," Singapore explained. Germany gripped the toolkit tightly in his hands, an ecstatic grin on his face.

"*Vielen Dank* Singapore."

Now, he faced Poland who had an expectant look on his face– though Poland was trying his best to hide it. With shaky hands, Germany passed the wrapped gift to Poland who took the little note attached to the package, reading it before pocketing it in his jacket. Unwrapping it, he gasped in surprise. "This is..." his voice was shaky, "It's..."

"You don't like it right? I'm sorry, I didn't know what you liked and I–"

"ARE YOU KIDDING ME?! THIS IS THE BEST CHRISTMAS GIFT EVER!" Poland screamed, drawing the attention of the people surrounding them. He rushed to hug Germany much to everyone's surprise. Germany's eyes widened as he nearly fell to the ground but managed to steady himself in time. Laughing, he hugged Poland

back.

Releasing Germany, Poland profusely thanked him for the gift. "It's so cool! I mean, look at the design!" his eyes shone with enthusiasm as he raved on and on about the gift. The others chuckled, amused by his reaction.

"Hopefully it'll prevent your photo from getting into more accidents," Germany joked.

"We'll see."

The group continued to walk around the village for a little while longer since they wanted to have dinner there. When they passed by the huge Christmas tree in the middle of the village, Ukraine insisted on taking a group photo there. Paying a photographer, she grabbed everyone by the sleeves to take the photo.

"One, two...three!"

SNAP!

Once the photo had been developed, everyone crowded around to see it. Ukraine paid for a couple more copies and distributed it to everyone. "It's my Christmas gift to all of you." Germany held the photo in his hands, a smile on his face. It was his first photo with others and he could hardly believe that it was real. And yet, here it was. *I guess Oma and Berlin were right afterall.*

Looking at the group, he couldn't help but tear up. It may have taken him a long time but at last, his dream had come true. He *finally* had people he could call his friends. Perhaps wishing on a shooting star does make dreams come true.

(The End)

TRANSLATION:

"Vielen Dank Singapore." --Thank you very much Singapore

A/N: I've tried lol. It's a little rushed since I started this a lil late but I hope you enjoyed the story. I can't believe it cause this was gonna be a short story but nope! I made this as long as a typical chapter :/

Anyways, now I need to do my New Year drawing PLUS 10k drawing and a whole load of stuff. And in case you don't follow me or haven't checked, I'm putting up a fanart contest for the 10K reads! All info is in my artbook so do check it out!

Christmas is ending on my side in a couple hours but for those who are still celebrating it, Merry Christmas once more <3

BYEEEEEEEEEE!

Imprisoned

[image]

The throne room was long and grand with white roman pillars supporting the structure. Gold chandeliers hung from the ceiling, the blue fire candles flickering. Despite the warmth the room provided, I still felt cold. Soldiers lined the perimeter of the room, all at attention, swords gleaming in the blue light. At the very end of the hall was a red and gold structure with some bird emblem which I presumed to be the family crest. The Tsar sat upon a gold throne, a sceptre in one hand. He wore an extremely decorated uniform in dark green with a half cape attached to his shoulder. In front of him were 15 chairs, 5 of which were empty. The remaining 10 chairs were filled with children of different ages and genders dressed in an array of expensive clothing. Each and everyone of them had a smile on their face which was creepy beyond words. *The royal children.* One of the girls' eyes widened but it quickly vanished as she resumed her serene look. *She looks...familiar...*

We stopped about a meter away from the royals and the soldiers forced us into a kneeling position. Singapore fell to his knees, eyes glassy as he stared at the ground. America struggled for a bit before Canada glared at him, jerking his own head downwards. *Obey them*. Scowling, America complied. Germany was held up by a soldier, eyes shut having fallen back into unconsciousness. Blood had seeped through the makeshift bandage, and was dripping down his face once more. Ukraine was next to me, her head bowed. The remaining soldiers stayed behind us, blocking the only way we could escape. When the children's gaze fell on Germany, their faces became stony and whispers filled the hall.

Tsar USSR slammed his sceptre on the stage he sat upon. "Silence," his voice reverberated through the hall. His children stiffened and immediately fell silent. "Moscow, a report on the events," he ordered. Moscow walked up to the Tsar, bowing as he detailed what had happened. As if on cue, a look of disdain appeared on the royal

children's face and they shook their heads slowly as they stared at Ukraine. She had a mix of discomfort and disgust on her face but didn't say anything. Tsar USSR eyed us, curiosity in his gaze. When Moscow had finished, he nodded and straightened himself in his seat. Moscow returned to his place behind us, a horrid smirk on his face. I wanted to wipe it off his stupid face but I knew that if I even tried anything remotely like that, I risked getting the rest of us in deeper trouble.

"Ukraine? What do you have to say for yourself?" Tsar USSR asked.

Ukraine remained silent, face expressionless as she continued to stare at the ground. The Tsar sighed dramatically as he continued, "You disobeyed my instructions *and* broke our laws. What happened? Don't tell me you've forgotten your lessons just because I've permitted you to hang out with these...imbeciles." America's face contorted in displeasure as he muttered, "You're the imbecile."

"America..." Canada warned in a low voice but it was too late. Snapping his head towards the twins, he slammed his sceptre down. I felt an icy wave cross my body and couldn't help shivering violently. Germany stirred but didn't regain consciousness but a low groan did come out of his mouth. "Respect *Prince* America," Tsar USSR sneered, "We may both be royals but do not forget where you stand."

"Oh I'm sorry but did I hurt your cold ass heart?" America snarked back. Canada hissed, irritation showing on his face. The soldiers that remained behind us moved but Tsar USSR raised a hand to stop them as he eyed the rest of us. Noticing Germany, he asked, "How did he get injured?" There was a noticeable iciness to his voice.

"A scuffle Your Imperial Majesty. It occurred when I had to subdue him," Moscow explained.

"Why wasn't he rendered medical attention?" Tsar USSR questioned.

Moscow didn't have an answer and the Tsar snapped, "*КАК МОЖНО НЕТ?! ОН МОЖЕТ БЫТЬ ЗАКЛЮЧЕННЫМ, НО ОН ВСЕ ЕЩЕ КОРОЛЕВСКИЙ! Черт возьми, что скажет королева Пруссия, когда узнает?!*"

"Apologies, Your Imperial Majesty. It was an oversight on our part," Moscow apologised. Tsar USSR scowled as he instructed Moscow and the soldier carrying Germany to bring him to the royal doctor. Once he saw them exit, he cocked his head at Ukraine, jerking a hand in the general direction where Germany had been brought to. "Was that the reason you refused to speak, daughter? Now that I have given attention to your injured...friend, will you be willing to talk?" he asked.

Ukraine remained stubbornly silent. Tsar USSR and the royal children stared at her, the displeasure on their faces growing by the second. Italy shifted nervously as he whispered, "Ukraine, please, just explain everything to your father. We can't risk getting into more trouble." Nothing, no response, not even a discreet shake of her head. It was as if Ukraine had turned into a statue. Anger creeped onto the Tsar's face, body shaking, "Я СКАЗАЛ ГОВОРИ, КОГДА ЗАДАЮ ВАМ ВОПРОС! ВЫ МЕНЯ НЕ ПОНИМАЕТЕ?! ВЫ УЖЕ ЗАБЫЛИ ВЕСЬ УРОК УКРАИНА?!" His voice grated against my ears and I felt my heart rate increasing as the tendrils of the past threatened to grab me and pull me under. *No, no...stay here, deep breaths Poland. Don't...he's dead. He's dead.* I tried to take deep breaths but was unsuccessful.

BUT HIS ALLY LIVES ON! The frightened part of my mind wailed.

The Tsar slammed his fist against his throne's armrest, startling everyone–minus the soldiers and Ukraine. He growled out something in a foreign language as pinched the bridge of his nose. "I can only assume that you came to the kingdom as a way to save the Kingdom of Darkness from the monster, though why you'd want to save that *bastard's* kingdom puzzles me beyond words. I *explicitly* told you and your siblings to remain at the academy where it is safe. Perhaps these...people," he waved a hand at us, "Have caused you to forget the lessons I taught you. I truly apologise that I've been too hands-off with you. Tomorrow, your lessons will resume. The rest of you however." He looked at us, concern etched on his face. *Fake.*

"You'll be placed in the prison. I do find it rather *irresponsible* of me as both a ruler and an *adult* to let you continue your journey when you're bound to fail anyways and get yourself killed. I don't think

your families or kingdom would like that right?"
I don't care about your safety. If you weren't royals or the son of my children's teacher I'd kill you.

Singapore had seemed to regain some lucidity and looked extremely terrified, face pale, body shaking. I wished Ukraine would speak but she still looked down, mouth shut tight. I couldn't tell if she was doing this out of rebellion or was she accepting her fate. "Ukraine! Say something goddamnit!" America cursed.

"I have no say in this America," Ukraine spoke for the first time, her voice thick with emotion.

"What the hell does that mean?!" Canada stood up suddenly causing the soldiers to pull out their weapons. The Tsar shook his head, clasping his hands as he sat back in his seat. *I want to see this play out*, he seemed to say. The royal children looked at their sister with interest and I felt repulsed. Had we really become pawns and entertainment to these people?

"Ukraine, what do you mean?" Japan asked softly.

"She means exactly what she has said, isn't that right?" Tsar USSR asked.

"I am no longer a princess, legally. I do not have a say in what His Imperial Majesty wants me or us to do. All I am is his daughter and subject," her voice was flat as if she had repeated this a thousand times but towards the end, I could hear her resigned tone. *Was this why Moscow said we were in no position to argue with him?*

The rest of us gaped in shock before Canada yelled, "And you...you didn't tell us?!" He was unusually angry, face red, fists clenched. "I couldn't...I...I didn't know what to say...and...fa–the Tsar told me not to let this be public until I finished my education," Ukraine looked close to tears as she looked down at the ground.

The Tsar laughed, it was deep and rough as he mocked us, "Not so confident now are you?"

It was like our fighting morale had completely been snuffed out,

even America whose bravado had somehow been keeping us afloat had disappeared. The flame in his eyes had been extinguished, leaving them empty and cold. The children smirked simultaneously although I noticed one of them looked extremely uncomfortable doing so.

"Soldiers, take them to the dungeon. Ukraine, remain here," Tsar USSR ordered. We were hoisted from the ground and brought out of the throne room. Italy looked shocked, his eyes unseeing. Japan kept mouthing something to herself as if trying to convince herself it was a dream. The twins had their heads lowered. I could see Canada's eyes shining in the light with unshed tears. Singapore had a resigned look on his face as if he were thinking, *Here we go again.*

*

Singapore wasn't wrong. As we entered the dungeon, I felt my breaths quicken. Wails and screams from my past filled my ears and my vision wavering. Royal dungeons all seemed to be designed by the same person, at least in Western Pangea. Dingy and cramped hallways, the smell of blood, decay and sweat in the air and cold, blood stained cells. I could even smell vomit.

Japan and Singapore were thrown into one cell, Italy and Canada in another while me and America were thrown in separate ones. *Isolation cell.* "Your friend join you later. Don't make noise," the soldier told me coldly before locking the iron door shut.

A thin stream of moonlight from the small window/ventilation grate barely illuminated the rock ground. I curled into a ball trying to preserve the little warmth I had left. I wasn't wearing particularly thick clothing and could feel the chilly air on my skin. There was the sound of dripping water and I swore I heard the sound of scurrying. Then again I could be hallucinating. *Do rats come out during the winter?*

I shifted nervously on the hard ground, grimacing. When I was imprisoned by TR, I remembered the cell I had been placed in was infested with rats. At night, I heard them scurry across the stone floor and once, I'd woken up to a rat in my face. A dead rat.

Please, please, please don't let there be any rats. I rocked back and forth, rubbing my hands for some warmth. My breaths came out in frigid puffs of air and I was shivering. Water dripped from who knew where and I whimpered. *Think good thoughts Poland. Good thoughts...Papa, the warmth...* I shut my eyes, hoping to visualise the good memories better but they were overshadowed by the nightmares.

~

Screams of agony...begging for mercy...praying for help but it never arrives. Blood on the walls and floor, an eyeball rolling away into the darkness. Feathers, tainted crimson land on the floor. Red eyes stare at me maniacally as a knife's blade is twisted in my arm, warm blood on my hands.

~

BAM!

The iron door slammed against the wall as Germany was thrown onto the ground roughly. His cloak was almost like rags, clothes torn in several places, exposing his skin. He had a bandage wrapped around his forehead although blood was already seeping through. His glasses hadn't been replaced, although I did notice that some tape had been used to help secure the bridge. He groaned, struggling to sit up.

"Poland?" he rasped, squinting.

I looked away, refusing to reply. "Are you okay?" he asked.

Germany sighed at my lack of response and it infuriated me that his "sadness" made me feel bad. *He doesn't need to care for me! Who does he think he is?!* I clenched my fists, gritting my teeth. Did he really think regaining my trust was that easy after he tried to kill me? Hah, maybe in his dreams.

"Poland, look at me, please," Germany's voice was soft yet firm. I hated it.

"I know you're angry. Betrayed even but I...I'm really really sorry.

Everything was my fault and I shouldn't have tried to kill you. This apology doesn't negate the damage I caused to you physically and emotionally, I know that but for now, can we please put this aside? For our kingdoms? Please?"

I let out a cold laugh, turning to look at him. The moonlight reflected off his broken glasses, highlighting the cracks across it. "Y'know something Germany? At this point, I don't think I can give a shit about your stupid kingdom! Honestly, why should I help you after what you've done to me? Why should the rest of us save your home huh? Frankly, the rest of our kingdoms probably aren't affected at all! Maybe letting your kingdom go to ruin would be better!" I spat.

"You know that's not true. We already know the Tulie Occult is in the Kingdom of Sand. Apophis' influence will only continue to spread. Your kingdom won't be safe either," Germany said.

I gritted my teeth, glaring at him. He was right. As usual. Crawling towards me, he sat next to me. I shifted and he followed me. The cycle repeated for a while until finally, in a fit of anger, threw him against the ground. He let out a hiss of pain.

"Stop it! Just stop following me! It's pitiful and it's...it's disgusting! I hate you!" I yelled, all rational thoughts lost to the roar of blood in my ears.

Hurt flashed across Germany's eyes. He moved away from me, hiding in a dark corner. I huffed, wrapping my cloak around myself as I curled into a ball. Shutting my eyes tight, I allowed sleep to take me away. Perhaps there, I'd find comfort in the hellhole I was in.

Translations:

КАК МОЖНО НЕТ?! ОН МОЖЕТ БЫТЬ ЗАКЛЮЧЕННЫМ, НО ОН ВСЕ ЕЩЕ КОРОЛЕВСКИЙ! Черт возьми, что скажет королева Пруссия, когда узнает?!--HOW CAN YOU NOT?! HE MAY BE A PRISONER, BUT HE'S STILL A ROYAL! Damn it, what will Queen of Prussia say when she finds out?!

Я СКАЗАЛ ГОВОРИ, КОГДА ЗАДАЮ ВАМ ВОПРОС! ВЫ МЕНЯ НЕ ПОНИМАЕТЕ?! ВЫ УЖЕ ЗАБЫЛИ ВЕСЬ УРОК УКРАИНА?!--I SAID SPEAK UP WHEN I ASK YOU A QUESTION! DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND ME?! HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN THE LESSONS UKRAINE?!

A/N: Happy New Year guysssss :D Or Happy New Year Eve. I can't wait for the next Link Click: Bridon Arc to come out. Link Click is a DongHua I'm in love with and it's sooooo good. PLEASE WATCH IT! 10/10 show totally just a simple show about helping to resolve people's regrets.

In the distance we hear Eli's ugly sobbing

[image]

I wanna buy a duck jacket so bad now... :/

Also, side note, I love how everyone who has drawn me so far as fanart (THANK YOU GUYS Y'ALL AMAZING) seem to draw me with curly hair or short hair. Cause I think everyone based it off my persona (which honestly looks like me) except I have longer hair irl.

Anyways, question time!

1) What do you think is gonna happen next?

2) Is Poland's reaction necessary? (I wld say yes)

3) Who do you want me to draw next?

2025, I'm probably gonna be a bit busy but I'll try to keep the update schedule to as of now (2 weeks or so depends). Now, byeeeeee!

(I have run out of things to yap about here lol)

Restart

[image]

I had regained consciousness by the time the soldier carrying me reached the infirmary. Moscow exchanged some words with the doctor who was named Kazan. I was placed on a bed and Kazan gave me an examination. She made me follow her finger and asked if I had any headaches amongst other queries. I shook my head and she gave a sigh of relief.

"*Тебе повезло, что ты не причинил ему повреждения мозга*," she told Moscow who scowled.

"*Заткнись, Казань. Мне не нужно твое мнение. Просто забинтуйте его и поторопитесь!*" he snapped. My knowledge of Russian wasn't great (I could barely have a conversation) but I was pretty sure Moscow told her to shut up and just finish her job. She rolled her eyes as she applied some ointment to my wound. I hissed and the soldier glared at me. I tried to stop myself from moving around too much but the pain was making it hard to do so.

"You're lucky Moscow didn't give you a nasty cut," she murmured in a thick accent, wrapping a bandage around my forehead.

"Why do you want to help me? I'm a prisoner," I whispered.

"And I'm a doctor. Helping the sick and injured is what I do. Being the royal doctor doesn't change that. I took an oath and I will always keep it," she replied softly, grabbing some tape to secure my glasses.

Leaning away from me, she taped the loose ends of the bandage. Rummaging through a trolley next to her, she gave me a bottle of ointment, painkillers and bandages along with a roll of medical tape. Moscow eyed her and demanded she return the items to the trolley.

"He needs them!" she argued.

"No he does not!"

"Yes he does!"

"*Казань, слушай Москву. Положите предметы обратно сейчас,*" the soldier interjected. She glared at him and he took a step back. "He *is* getting them, doctor's orders," she hissed. Moscow grunted, gritting his teeth as he snatched the items out of her grasps. "*Глупая сука*," he cursed only for Kazan to slap him across the face.

"*Уважай меня, Москва. Может, ты и генерал, но у меня звание выше,*" she warned, unbridled rage within her eyes. Her fists clenched and unclenched. Moscow held his cheek and I knew that he was holding back from harming her. Russia had told me that Moscow had a tendency to go out of control when he was angry (or drunk) and that it was only Tsar USSR's orders that prevented him from doing anything too...extreme.

As we left, he growled, "*Если бы я хотел, я бы позаботился о том, чтобы ты оказался в тюрьме.*" Kazan paled but held her head up high, unwavering. I smiled at her, discreetly mouthing the word, 'Spasibo'. She nodded and I caught a hint of a smile before the soldier dragged me away.

*

I was brought to the dungeon and wrinkled my nose at the smell blood. It reminded me all too well of that fateful day. There was wailing, begging and screaming and I felt my stomach twisting. We continued to walk for a long time and I caught glimpses of prisoners being tortured. I didn't recognise anyone (fortunately) so I assumed it must have been some of the Tsar's personal enemies or something along those lines. Normal prisoners like thieves or scammers amongst other criminals were placed in different prisons all over the kingdom and were made to do hard labour. Typically, the royal dungeon was for those the Tsar deemed a threat to himself and locked them up in his palace.

"Keep your allies close but your enemies closer," Russia had told me

once.

We soon reached a metal door with bloodstains on it. It was dark and I could hardly see anything. Moscow opened the door and it slammed against the wall. I was shoved in and I tripped over my feet, falling onto the ground. Hard. Dismay filled me when I realised that the soldier had kept the supplies Kazan had given me. Before I could react, the door shut.

Groaning, I tried my best to sit up. In the dim lighting, courtesy of the weak moonlight, I noticed a familiar person curled in the centre of the cell. *White, Red...* "Poland?" I rasped, "Are you okay?" No reply.

"Poland, look at me, please," I told him, hoping for one small reply. I didn't care that he'd lash out at me. I just wanted to know if he was fine. Did he have injuries? Obviously he wouldn't want my help but I could always try.

He remained silent. I felt annoyance rise within me but reminded myself I deserved it. Partially. Biting my cheek, I tried to think how I could get him to talk to me. "Apologise to him," West suggested. East, for once, was quiet. *But...I don't want to.* "Remember Germany, you stay quiet and accept the blows and pray that it ends soon. When you're the descendant of an evil force...you have to do things you're not going to like," she continued, a hint of sadness in her voice, "Even if it means apologising to someone who has wronged you. You're wrong for trying to kill him."

I groaned internally, knowing she was right. *Don't get angry if he lashes out at you.* "I know you're angry. Betrayed even and I...I'm really really sorry. Everything was my fault and I shouldn't have tried to kill you. This apology doesn't negate the damage I caused to you physically and emotionally, I know that but for now, can we please put this aside? For our kingdoms? Please?" I begged, desperate.

Poland let out a laugh, turning to look at me. His eyes were wide, hair a mess. A smile was on his face and for a moment, hope filled me. Perhaps my words had gotten through, maybe he wasn't–

"Y'know something Germany? I don't think I can give a shit about your stupid kingdom at this point! Why should I help you after what you've done to me? Why should the rest of us save your home? The rest of our kingdoms probably aren't affected at all! Maybe letting your kingdom go to ruin would be better!" Poland hissed venomously.

"You know that isn't true! The Tulie Occult is in the Kingdom of Sand. Apophis' influence will only continue to spread. Your kingdom won't be safe either," I told him. Crawling towards Poland, I sat next to him. He shifted and I followed. We seemed to go in a circle, neither of us backing down. Until...

I fell to the ground, clutching my arm, wincing in pain. *My skin definitely tore.* I didn't have a chance to think further because Poland had begun screaming at me. His words struck me deep and I had to fight the urge to cry. I couldn't. How could I? It just wasn't right at all.

When he finished, I nodded numbly, shifting to my own corner. He curled into a ball, wrapping his cloak around himself. The sound of dripping water filled my ears. They were meant to fill the silence but it felt all encompassing.

I hated it.

I hated how my *one* stupid action had caused Poland to hate me again. I hated that I ruined my relationship with Italy and worse of all, I hated how much I cared. "Why? Why does this hurt so much?" I whispered, "Why do I care so much now?" My chest hurt. I had been fine for years, not having friends or companions. I was fine when people made nasty remarks about me. I had handled it with calm and indifference, only showing my true feelings when I was alone. Why was it now that the walls I had built around myself so carefully were being broken down right before my eyes? Tears welled in my eyes and I wiped them away roughly, irritation rising within me. *Don't cry. Don't cry. You can't cry.*

"And yet you want to," West said.

But I shouldn't.

West tutted in disapproval but I ignored her. Wiping my face, I concentrated my focus on mapping out the cell's layout. Perhaps I could find a way out. Maybe then...maybe everyone could forgive my huge screw-up.

*

"NO! PLEASE STOP IT! NO!" Poland's screams filled my hearing, jolting me out of my light slumber. Groggily, I looked around the cell only to spot Poland huddling in a corner, eyes wide in terror. I could hear his ragged breaths as he raised his hands. It seemed like he was experiencing a traumatic flashback.

"I promise I'll be good! Please stop!" he sobbed hysterically. He screamed, covering his ears. "Poland?" I stood up, walking nearer to him. He only shrieked louder. "NO! STAY AWAY FROM ME! STAY AWAY!" he pleaded, crawling backwards.

"POLAND! IT'S ME! GERMANY!" I shouted, clapping my hands in front of his face. It only scared him further. Tears streamed down his face and I could see the scratches on his face. *What should I do?* I was at a loss.

"Sing to him. It calmed him down before," East murmured, uncharacteristically helpful.

Sing? You can't be serious? He's not coming out of a nightmare! It's a flashback!

"You can still try it."

I sighed, looking towards Poland who shivered, curling into a ball. "Please...I promise I won't disobey you! Just don't harm me or Papa! Please–OW!" he yelped. *It's worth a shot.* Clearing my throat, I began to sing Oma's lullaby. It was far from perfect, my voice cracking ever so often. My throat hurt, the lack of water made my voice scratchy.

" Schlaf jetzt ein

Schlaf jetzt ein

Schlaf jetzt ein

Schlaf ein... "

I finished the song, coughing. Poland had finally stopped screaming somewhere halfway through the song, quietening down. Looking at him, he had finally regained some lucidity in his eyes. His breathing was still irregular and his face was pale. "Are you with me?" I asked gently, looking at him. He stared at the ground, nodding.

"Good," I replied, "Just concentrate on breathing okay? Deep breathes and exhale slowly. Like this." I demonstrated and he followed obediently. After a while, he looked up at me. I expected hostility to appear in his eyes but instead all I saw was embarrassment and...gratitude?

"I...er...thank you," he rasped.

I hummed in response before falling silent. An awkward tension filled the cell which I tried to ignore. Swallowing, I desperately wished for some water. My throat hurt so badly. "The lullaby," Poland stated as if it were a fact, "It wasn't something my mind conjured up for me was it? It was you this whole time. You sang it." I nodded slowly, unsure where he was getting at.

"Why?" he asked.

"Huh?"

"Why help me? After everything I've said and done to you. Why do you still want to help me?" he asked, "What is it exactly Germany? Is it your conscience speaking? Or maybe you want me to shut up. I know you hate loud noises."

I stared at him, irritation rising within me. *He really thinks I'm doing this out of an obligation?* My fists clenched as I murmured, "Do you think that lowly of me? That I do this out of compulsion? Have you thought about the fact that I do this because I care about you?" *And right now, I regret ever giving you my care. You don't reciprocate it back!* Poland looked at me in surprise as he opened and closed his mouth. I turned away from him as I continued in a low voice, "I

don't care if you don't forgive me. But just know that this wasn't out of any sort of conscience shit."

For a long time, neither of us said anything. I had shifted back to my corner, rubbing my hands for some warmth. In the distance, I could hear the birds cawing, signaling the arrival of a new day. For a brief moment, I wondered how much longer we would be stuck here. I heard the rustle of fabric as Poland sat next to me. I turned my head to look at me, one eyebrow raised.

"I...I'm sorry Germany," he blurted out of the blue, "Back there...I shouldn't have insulted you like that. I know I went too far. You're not like your father at all. You've been so nice to me and I...I've been acting like a jerk." He hung his head in shame, a regretful smile on his face. "I've been so stupid," he laughed sorrowfully.

"No shit," I scoffed but there was no hostility behind my words. Poland cringed, rubbing his head. Sighing, I continued, "I'm not mad anymore and I'm equally as sorry. Strangling you wasn't right and I'm sorry that I lost my temper at you. You...you didn't deserve it especially since I know your past experiences."

Poland chuckled softly, hugging his knees. "I'm so stubborn," he shook his hair out of his face, "I shouldn't have been mad at you. You did nothing to deserve my anger from the start." I opened my mouth to protest but he continued. "My anger towards you...it's senseless. You never did anything wrong at all...I mean, I would have also been too shocked to stop TR if I were in your shoes. My grudge towards you is mindless and absurd yet I carried it on and on. Gods–I'm so dumb," he chuckled mirthlessly, head in his hands.

I was at a loss for words. Never in a million years had I expected him to apologise to me like this. "It's just...after your father's death I...I was so angry. How could he have died so easily without ever going to trial for his crimes? It wasn't fair at all. And when I saw you again–" he paused, swallowing, "You reminded me too much of him and the suffering I endured. And I was still angry. Angry that you could have helped me and yet–you never did. But...I can't blame you, can I? You were just another innocent kid who saw horrors he wasn't supposed to see. And only to realise your father was not who he made himself out to be."

I sniffed, wiping my eyes. "I'm sorry too," I choked out, "I understand why you were mad and some of the things I did? Equally as stupid." The corners of Poland's mouth lifted as he smirked at me. "I guess this makes us even huh?" he commented. I laughed, nodding.

Poland extended his pinky finger as he asked, "Can we restart and put the past behind us please?" I wound my pinky around his, a small smile on my face. "Prince of the Kingdom of Darkness, Federal Republic of Germany. Pleased to meet you."

"I'm Prince of the Kingdom of Light, Republic of Poland. Nice to meet you."

Translations:

Тебе повезло, что ты не причинил ему повреждения мозга.--You're lucky you didn't cause him brain damage.

Заткнись, Казань. Мне не нужно твое мнение. Просто забинтуйте его и поторопитесь!--Shut up, Kazan. I don't need your opinion. Just bandage it and hurry up!

Казань, слушай Москву. Положите предметы обратно сейчас--Kazan, listen to Moscow. Put the items back now.

Глупая сука--Stupid bitch

Если бы я хотел, я бы позаботился о том, чтобы ты оказался в тюрьме.--If I had my way, I would make sure you end up in jail.

A/N: Haiiiii everyone!!! :D Hope you liked the chapter and look! Our main characters are making up now >:) Now to know how they'll get out... *intense thinking ensues*

Also, the Snake Year for Lunar New Year is coming but all the decorations mostly have cats or Cai Sheng Ye (Fortune God--I think) instead of snakes hahahahahahhaha. BUT LOOK WHO MADE A REAPPERANCEEEE!

[image]

IT'S THE DINO ORNAMENT/DECO I SAW AT MY LOCAL GROCERY STORE LAST YEARRR!!! IT'S SO CUTEEEE ARGHHHHH--

Also, I'm really sorry to everyone but my 10K chapter will only have the questions and not the writing requests. I've been really busy with stuff and haven't quite gotten to writing the requested writings yet. Of course, I do have a gae-- I MEAN GAME--plan which is to release the new chapters with the writing requests so do look forward to that. And the 10k drawing will also appear soon too.

Once again, I'm really sorry for the disappointment but I'll try my best to get the stories out as soon as I can!

Now on to the 10K Q&A!!!

10K Q&A!!!

[image]

I know I've said this like 10 times already but thank you everyone for making this dream of mind come true! I think for some people 10K is like kinda nothing but like this means so much to me cause I didn't even think I'd reach 10K at all lol. So thank you :) It means the world to me (esp. since like it's my first (fanfic) book posted and now I have motivation to finish it lmao)

LET'S STARTTTT!

Q: How does the German family tree work in this au? Is my question cause people do it differently

A1: Gotta be honest, I don't know, never really thought about it. So here's a short one (and my rough idea): Holy Roman Empire is the father of Prussia, German Empire is from another kingdom (Prussia and G.E marry for stability, kinda thing), TR marries commoner and is father of Germany. Done.

A2: But the more I think and read through Germany's history, the more weird A1 becomes for me so, oh boy, this is gonna be a long answer. Grab your water. First things first, I wanna say that the Roman Empire is like the **GREAT** ancestor of pretty much the whole of West Pangea. Mmmm next, let's see who the family members are: (Okay–I checked the CH wiki for some starting point and there is like **a lot** so we're gonna just go from HRE cause I'm basing this partially off Ohlolu's (Youtuber) headcanon and in general because goddamn there is wayyyy too much history to unpack for a fanfic right now)

Holy Roman Empire and Teutonic Order

First, the Holy Roman Empire (HRE) lasted for a **damn long time**. (From the middle ages till 1806) Humanly that is impossible and I am not getting into this CH can live for a long time because that just messes up my story so much and this is an AU. So HRE that is the father of G.E, is the 10th one already. (HRE's family was very strict on the naming of the first born **MALE** child.)

I know in Ohlolu's animation, she makes Teutonic Order (TO) and HRE like a couple or something (sorry don't watch/haven't watched the series she created yet) but in my case, TO is the father of Prussia but he's kind of a shitty one. Spent more time furthering his capabilities then helping to nurture his daughter. State of the Teutonic Order was a theocratic state **(FROM WIKIPEDIA: Theocracy is a form of autocracy or oligarchy in which one or more deities are recognized as supreme ruling authorities, giving divine guidance to human intermediaries who manage the government's daily affairs)** back in the late middle ages and in this story, TO is a guy. Because of this, TO is like a...magical wizard if that makes sense. Also, he's not the first (once again, TO lasted for a long period of time. I know a lot of these older nations/ kingdoms lasted very long. Like Prussia lasted pretty long but y'know...*waves hands* some creative license has to happen right now ;-;. It's a shit ass excuse but I didn't really think the family line through properly when writing the story haha. I apologise for it.) and is most likely the 3rd or 4th one. (No one knows because some records got burnt.)

He and HRE the 10th were good friends and TO did become an informal advisor to HRE. He stayed with HRE for about 3 years and was well liked by HRE's subjects for helping them. Because of this, HRE allowed TO to become a duke and rule over a small portion of land. TO married another commoner who gave birth to Prussia.

Prussia and German Empire

Now here's where it gets messy cause HRE married a commoner and she gave birth to the German Empire. Then he married Prussia (which brings the ship count to two and makes me wanna puke blood because in a sense G.E would be the son of Prussia but then I

realised how messed up that would make my book and hcdhwdsbdswjdjsjsds I HAVE REASONS) and later gave birth to T.R or Weimar Republic (he changed his name later on much to Prussia's displeasure).

Prussia's mother died due to complications in child birth so she's never met her. TO (mentioned earlier) is a complete son of a bitch who is a horrible parent. TO died when Prussia was 17 from a carriage accident. As such she became an orphan and HRE decided to take her under his wing but under the condition she'd marry his son when she was 18. Prussia didn't want to but was forced into it anyway. So when she turned 18, she decided to run away and married her first love, a young stableboy (who was only a year older than her so don't worry she ain't being creepy) named Brandenburg. HRE was furious and tracked down Prussia and killed Brandenburg before forcefully making her marry G.E. After the forced union between the two, Prussia became the King Consort and gave birth to T.R.

To understand why I say Prussia married the G.E is mainly because Prussia and G.E were in a unification and they existed together (in a sense). Actually, Prussia was still (sort of) around until 1947 after WW2 (I'm not sure how accurate I am but Prussia was one of the reasons for German militarism or something along those lines so the Allies felt that by getting rid of Prussia, bye bye big goals of conquering the world.)

Third Reich

T.R later married another woman outside the royal family and she gave birth to Germany. I did mention once in my first Q&A that East and West Germany would have been Germany's siblings but that meant too many characters and a far too complicated storyline so they became his personal devil and angel. (Of course that being said, in my "normal" headcanon, East and West Germany are siblings and East died after reunification)

So yea, TL;DR, HRE the first is the forefather of this entire mess, HRE the 10th is a bitch, TO is a bitch, Prussia is Grandma of Ger and G.E is the evil grandfather and TR is the bastard Prussia had to give birth to and Germany right now is suffering hooray!

Q: Could you do one on the kingdoms like who rules them (and if we don't know just the heir) and their names cause I've confused myself with it. Like the name the known kingdoms and write who rules it. (eg. Kingdom of Darkness is ruled by Prussia and Germany's the heir kinda thing)

A: Damn, I actually have *all* the kingdoms planned out in my docs lmao. So this is gonna be a little long.

Kingdom of Darkness:
Ruled by **Kaiserin Prussia**, the heir to the throne is **Prince Federal Republic of Germany**. The climate here is very dreary and not much sunlight reaches the land. It is often cold and wet. Winter is the worst season as it is terribly cold. Despite this, the citizens are generally quite content. This is because the Kingdom of Darkness tries its best to provide as much welfare service for their citizens.

Some of the citizens were once in TR's army and tend to be a bit...wilder. They live on the edges of the kingdom, hiding away from the guards to avoid persecution for their war crimes. Some of them are held in the royal prison. Most however have been executed.

The Kingdom of Darkness can be dangerous especially in the capital's red light districts and towards the South-Western part of the kingdom. Drugs, theft (pickpocketing), assault can happen. Young women and girls are advised not to roam the streets late at night unless necessary.

The Kingdom of Darkness is not one of the richest kingdoms but it has enough to keep itself afloat. It is quite self-reliant although it does import some items from certain kingdoms (Historia and Dawn for example).

Kingdom of Light:
Ruled by **King P-L-C (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth)** the heir to the throne is **Prince Republic of Poland.** The climate here is often sunny and breezy. When it rains, it is rarely heavy. This only happens during the summer months but again, heavy rain is rare. The citizens are generally happy although the older generation still remembers the war and many suffer from trauma and flashbacks. A

notable feature of the kingdom is the large graveyard in the capital. These are the people killed during the war. The older generation hates the Kingdom of Darkness and many boycott products from there.
The Kingdom of Light is very rich and citizens enjoy a good and safe life. However, there are problems towards the outskirts of the kingdom where crime is high.

Kingdom of Winter:
The Kingdom of Winter is by far the largest kingdom although there have been rumours of it possibly breaking up. **The Tsar, USSR** has denied the claims. "Наше королевство сильное (Our kingdom is strong)," he has told other leaders. The **first in line for the throne is Russian Federation, the Kayaz of Winter.** The Tsar is known for having 'Trophy Children' but his citizens are not allowed to speak about this issue. The weather here can be extremely cold especially in the Northern part of the kingdom. However in the South-Western part, it can get very hot due to the deserts.

Unless you live in the city areas, you are considered poor and it is true. Many people in the rural areas are farmers growing special crops that are sold in the city. During the winter months however, many locals like to drink alcohol to cope with the cold weather. This unfortunately creates many drunkards on the streets. The Tsar, USSR, has now issued a drinking ban: "The royal court decrees that from 4am to 7pm, there shall be no drinking."

Some of the most common things exported from the kingdom include: Alcohol (the nastier stuff. {According to locals] To get the good stuff, you need to get smugglers as it's illegal to sell or bring the good alcohol out.), wheat and rye, tobacco, dolls (for some reasons people love creepy dolls–Britain mayyyy have one or two in his closet) and some rare potions.

Kingdom of Britannia:

The Kingdom of Britannia is also known as the Kingdom of Freedom, Opportunity, Dreams, Love, Summer...really they're known for a hellish amount of things. Not all good though. They are the second largest kingdom in Pangea (the place where they live) and they have deserts, forests and mountains. Britannia is ruled by

King Britain and Queen France. The **heir to the throne is United States of America**, commonly known as the Prince of Summer. This is the richest kingdom in Pangea. **Canada is the Prince of Nature**, **Australia** (YOUNGEST PRINCE_9 Years old) the **Prince of Britannia** who has no ability as of yet and finally **New Zealand** (2nd youngest_11 years old) **Prince of Dreams** has the ability to shapeshift into any animal he wants)

The weather here is considered good and is very similar to the Kingdom of Light's climate. But summer can get ridiculously hot at some points. Like really hot. Still, many people flock here for holidays and others also come here to seek a better life, particularly those coming from the Eastern side of Pangea.

Citizens are generally happy with life here however not everyone is happy with the influx of migrants. There have been reported cases of violence against these migrants especially in the rural areas. Drugs are controlled however there still are many people who abuse it especially in the red-light districts and at the edges of the kingdom.

Historia:

The Kingdom of Historia is by far the second oldest kingdom known to exist. (The oldest on the Western side of Pangea) They are currently **ruled under the royal court** although in another 3 years, **Prince Italy, is going to take the throne.** Their previous ruler was mysteriously killed mid-way during the war–rumours say Italy had done something but the royal court has denied the claims–causing them to switch sides.

The occupants of Historia have two main abilities: one that allows them to see into the past and bring paintings to life (though this is rarer). Prince Italy is the rare few who possess the "artsy" ability of Historia's occupants. He likes to use this ability a lot–mainly to prank court officials. (He has been berated multiple times)

The citizens are generally content with life and many like to spend the winter drinking mulled wine. The weather here is quite normal rotating through the seasons as per normal.

The kingdom is where many history scholars study due to the richness of the history surrounding the place. In the capital, there is a special building which only top level officials can enter. It is known as the Pangea History Building as everything related to the land's history is stored here. History scholars often wait almost half their lives to just enter the place for an hour. (You can't explore the place in an hour.) (Britain has free access lmao)

The Kingdom of Historia exports a lot of paintings, music instruments and some artefacts (on loan).

Kingdom of Dawn:

The Kingdom of Dawn is ruled by **Emperor Japan** and the **heir to the throne is Princess Neko Japan**, the Emperor's younger sibling. **Duke South Korea and North Korea** live with them in the royal palace. However, North Korea **does not** consider himself part of the family.

Citizens are okay with their lives but many suffer from overworking and in the capital, working conditions are ridiculously toxic. While the Kingdom of Dawn makes amazing things, many people forget the toxicity of the workplace. Unfortunately, many do not talk about this and not much is known.

The weather is pretty normal like in Historia but the spring season brings about the Sakura flowers season, an incredibly romantic time for couples.

Their Emperor has his father's (J.E) magic running through his veins but he refuses to use it as he is afraid that one day it might corrupt him. Instead, he simply trains hard in martial arts so that he cannot be defeated easily. He is also the army general and soldiers call him: The Rising Sun Shogun.

Kingdom of Silk:

The 3rd largest and 3rd oldest Kingdom in Pangea, it is ruled by **Emperor Qing (Dynasty)** and the **successor is Qin Wang (Prince) China**. They are known for influencing most of the Eastern Pangea culture. The kingdom also enjoys good ties with the Kingdom of

Winter. On the other hand, they have poor relations with the Kingdom of Dawn after what the kingdom did to them during the Second Great War.

The Kingdom of Silk, as their name suggests, mainly exports silk as well as other fabrics. They also trade some rare stones—jade is the most common—, herbs, spices and teas. The Kingdom of Silk is known for a long wall that separates the kingdom into two. It used to be used in the beginnings of the kingdom but after expansion, the wall became unnecessary. It is now an attraction in the kingdom that many people like to go to. However, the Emperor is contemplating creating another wall surrounding the land to control who can enter or not enter the kingdom.

Locals are split into two main groups: Supporters and "Enemies". The "Enemies" hate how stiff the kingdom is with news distribution —all news agencies are under the Royal court's control. There have been several clashes in the past few years post-war although they have been solved "amicably" as the Royal Court will say.

The kingdom is considered relatively safe however they do have a drug and prostitution issue that remains from their past. Typically, it is advised that foreigners do not enter the gambling areas since those are the shady parts of the kingdom. Many gangs rule there.

Kingdom of Sand:

The oldest kingdom to exist, it is ruled by **Queen Egypt.** They are considered the most dangerous kingdom as there are several violent thieves and fights are common. The weather is extremely hot and dry causing several deaths due to heat stroke or dehydration every year. Despite this, many people still visit the kingdom to view the ancient structures that the first settlers built. The kingdom is known for its beautiful crafts. Most people are advised to travel at night and in the early morning to avoid the heat. Only kingdom known who can create objects to store the "portal" energy.

Q: What was your inspiration for your book?

A: I AM VERY VERY VERY VERY VERY HAPPY YOU ASKED SO THANK YOU! So the book was actually based on (what I pray to be)

an original idea of mine. Here it is:

Years ago, the Shadow Kingdom and Light Kingdom had a dispute which turned into a war. Although the war ended, both kingdoms paid a price. Thousands of warriors were lost on both sides leaving them weak and vulnerable. Both Kingdoms never trusted each other again and went to extreme measures to ensure that neither one could pass into their kingdom.

Years later, Nova, son of the ruler of the Light Kingdom, accidentally meets a shadowling (Young shadow Kingdom kids). The shadowling however disappears in a blink of an eye leading Nova to believe he had imagined it all. He soon forgets about the incident.

However, on Nova's 16th birthday, a mysterious and terrifying monster arrives, threatening to destroy the land. Nova meets the shadowling again when she comes to seek help. However, she is imprisoned instead. Nova decides to help her and, together, they run away. The shadowling tells Nova that her kingdom and his must work together or else both kingdoms and the land shall perish.

There was gonna be romance between the two characters here. But cause I don't really feel comfortable writing about shipping (and in general shipping landmasses) so Bound by Destiny has no ships (aside from some like UK x France and G.E x Prussia [EW NO BUT I HAVE A GOOD REASON BUT EWWWWWWWW])

Power wise, it was based off Keeper of the Lost Cities in terms of the shadow abilities (I loveeee Tam) and in a sense still plays a very big part in this story as well.

So yep! That was my inspiration for the book!

Q: How did you get into the fandom?

https://youtu.be/DMgMz_v5lZw

[image]

Tada! That is basically how I got into this fandom :D I was actually searching for more music videos for 'The Night' by Avicci and

stumbled onto this video and then fell in love with the fandom. Then that went to finding fanfic and of course now, writing one. I don't remember how I came across Where Winter Meets Summer by Onyxxcrow to be very honest but I do know it happened while my parents were buying Tiramisu! (It happened to be the art book first then I went to see her book lol)

As for Russian Roulette, woah...I actually cannot remember at all– I probably clicked either on the recommended reads or on the people Onyx follows.

But yea, that's pretty much how I fell into the fandom. Do I regret it? Not really. I regret seeing that *one* (sort of) NK x SG fanfic and I'm scarred.

Q: How do you do?

A: I'm doing great :) I can't wait to finish BbD though cause I WANNA START THE NEXT BOOOOOOOOOOK! Thanks for asking!

Request: umm.. maybe we get a scene of Austria and hungary in the academy or also with their parents !?□!?□!?□!?□ they have snacks together and.. umm.. fluff idk 🤔 idk who austria and hungary's parents are but my suggestion is either austria hungary with german empire or kingdom of hungary and austrian empire. Also. nordics. Iceland norway plEASE omg.

(To be finished)

Q: How are you feeling so far?

Great, as I type this however, my throat feels painful but by the time you read this, it's probably gone. :D Thanks for asking!

Request: I would also like to request some nice friend scenes that are fluff.

(To be finished)

Request: Oh Oh IW SEE ASEAN FAM BEING CHAOTIC PLSSS

(To be finished)

Request: WRITE US INTO CANON TO DO STUFF PLS (Always wanted a writer friend to do that :> > >)

(To be finished)

Q: What's BbD's MC's MBTI?

A: Great question! I did it in my artbook but that was eons ago so here's the MC's MBTI type!

Germany: ISTJ

Poland: ESFJ

And now for the rest cause why not!

America: ESTP

Singapore: INFJ

Japan: ESTJ

Italy: ENFP

Ukraine: INFJ

Canada: ESFP
*--A/N: HUH?! ERRRR OKAY??? Well, to be fair, Canada while quiet is not really an introvert and is more towards an ambivert. He's also far more confident. So while in a sense I often like to compare Singapore and Canada's...er what that word-- *brain processing* AH PERSONALITIES RIGHT! So while I compare the two's personalities and say they are similar (to myself), reality is very different hahahahahaha.*

If there are more questions, feel free to ask and I may add them to the Q&A! Hope I answered all your questions and see you soon!

Change of heart

[image]

Germany released my hand, a grin on his face. However, the reality of our situation soon returned us to our senses and the grin disappeared. "We need to find a way to get out," he stated, standing up as he looked around the cell. I don't know what he hoped to find. As far as I knew, most dungeons didn't have some secret passage–

Click.

We both stilled as the door opened slowly. A hunched cloaked figure stood at the doorway, their face obscured by their hood. However, I spotted a lock of white hair peeking out. Germany's eyes narrowed as he crept into the shadows slowly. They pocketed a ring of keys into their pockets and entered the cell silently–almost like a ghost. I clapped my hands over my mouth, heart racing. *Who is this person?* They looked around the cell, humming softly. *Thump! Thump! Thump!* My heart felt like it was going to explode out of my chest any second. My mind raced, going through all the horrible possibilities one by one in graphic detail. The hooded figure turned slowly in my direction and I stiffened. *Shit-*

"UGH!" they collapsed onto the ground as Germany pounced on them, "*какого черта!*" Germany's eyes widened as he yanked the figure's hood off. *It can't be...*

"Russia?" we said simultaneously in disbelief as he got up slowly, rubbing his head. He scowled as he rolled his eyes. "Yea, clearly," he huffed, getting up, wincing. Germany opened and closed his mouth, completely lost for words. Every time he tried to start a sentence he'd stop and pause before starting a new one.

"What are you doing here?" I asked, throat dry all of a sudden.

Russia looked at me in contempt as he adjusted his cloak. "Saving you obviously," he stated. "S- Sav- Saving u- us?" Germany

spluttered, incredulous, "You. The oh-so-great Kynaz, Russia. Saving us. Your father's prisoners."

"Yes."

The laughter Germany let out was scary to say the least. He looked like he had lost his mind, hair a mess as he giggled, gasping for air. "You...you...you have to be kidding me! You, saving...oh my god," he spoke between breaths, laughing. I didn't get the joke. Was Russia's reply really that hilarious? Russia clearly didn't think so, his face stony, hands clenched tightly.

"Yes. I'm here to help you get out. That's what you want, no?" he cocked his head, the slightest hint of emotion appearing on his face. One hand played with the fabric of his cloak the other drumming against the wall he leaned on. Germany scoffed, shaking his head. "Why are you even here? Didn't ASEAN..." he trailed off, unsure if he should continue. I bit my cheek as Russia stilled.

"I ran away. With Professor ASEAN and Ms AU's help," he replied after a moment, looking down at the ground.

Germany and I stared at him as if he were some alien. *He disobeyed his father's orders?* Shifting uncomfortably, he tugged at his cloak. "Whatever the case is, here are the keys to unlock the other cells. Take the back exit of the palace to escape to the stables. Germany you probably remember where the exit is. It's the one we used when we used to sneak out. *Зеркальный зал*," he shoved a ring of keys into Germany's hands as he pulled his hood over his head.

"Be fast. I don't know how long the ice paralysis will hold my father's guards, I'd give you...2 hours at max. Do not go anywhere near the *Королевские покои*. Kazan and Ukraine are waiting for you at the stables with some supplies and a tool to unlock your restrictors. Stay safe and good luck," Russia turned to leave, blending back into the shadows.

"How are we supposed to trust you? This could be the Tsar's doing!" I stepped forward, grabbing his wrist. His hood fell off as a flash of anger crossed his face, sending a violent shiver down my spine. My grip loosened and he yanked his hand away, crossing his arms.

Despite the dim lighting, I could see the dark circles under his eyes. His lower lip trembled although I could see he was trying to keep his calm indifference. Germany stepped forward, placing a hand on my shoulder as he eyed Russia warily.

"Why help us?" he rasped, "Why risk your father's displeasure?"

Russia looked at us in exasperation, groaning in frustration. "I don't think you realise it but do I look like I actually enjoy following my father's orders? Do you think I like how he gets to choose who my friends can be? Ugh, if you're going to be such a coward then give me back the keys! *Зачем я вообще рискнул всем ради этого идиота? Не могу поверить, что мы продолжали оставаться друзьями.*" he muttered. When Germany made no move, he stretched out his hand, jerking his head. "Come on, don't be shy," he drawled.

"No," Germany replied firmly, pocketing the keys. Russia's eyebrows rose and he tilted his head. Looking at Germany, I saw that his expression mimicked mine, eyebrows scrunched, lips turning downwards. But his eyes...within them held something I knew I didn't possess when it came to Russia.

Trust.

"Thank you Russia. I...we're going," Germany grabbed my wrist, making his way to the door.

"Whatever. Go now. Sunrise is coming and you've wasted enough time with me. I don't wish to see you here again. Do not come back. And Germany," Russia locked eyes with him, "Make sure you force Japan to use her powers properly. You wouldn't be like this if she had used her wits." I felt rage bubble within me and I desperately wanted to defend her but Germany simply nodded before dragging me away. Russia watched us leave, his expression unreadable.

*

We ran through the halls knowing time was of the essence. Yet, I couldn't help but question Russia's expression as we left. Something about it wasn't sitting right with me but for the life of me I just

couldn't figure it out. "Poland focus! Which cells are the others in?" Germany snapped a finger in my face, annoyed.

"Sorry, I was just thinking abo–"

"Save it for later. We need to get out. So which cells are the others in?" he asked again, fiddling with the keys.

I shut my eyes trying to recall the numbers before muttering, "0215–Japan and Singapore, 0321–Italy and Canada and America is in...0001." Germany clenched his teeth before thanking me. Unhooking a key, he passed it to me and instructed me to find America first. "We were in 0324, the numbers make no sense I know, the Tsar's like that. Confusion tactic or something but if I'm not wrong, the single man cells are closer to the entrance of the dungeon. So go first. I'll find the others."

"Are you sure? Maybe it's better–"

"I am," Germany cut in uncharacteristically, "Be fast."

I took a step backward, hesitantly nodding. "O...okay. We meet at where Russia told us to leave, right?" I asked. Germany nodded before adding, "Once you get America, run straight. It should lead you to the exit." With that, he ran off in the opposite direction leaving me alone.

I ran through the hallway, heart racing. *0321, 0421, 0030...0005? NONE OF THESE NUMBERS MAKE SENSE!* I wiped my face, panting. *Where the hell is 0001?* For a brief moment, I considered yelling out America's name but decided against it. *Unwise, you'd attract guards,* I could almost hear Germany tutting disapprovingly.

After several more minutes of running, I finally found my target. I unlocked the cell door and entered. "America? It's me, Poland!" I called out to a shivering figure who rocked back and forth. I took a step closer only to be stopped by a soft desperate string of 'no-s'. America's voice was feeble and raspy, completely the opposite of his usual demeanour.

"Hey! Hey! Are you okay?" I rushed to his side, forcing him to look

at me, "America, are you with me?"

"C...co...col...cold," he stammered, eyes unseeing. His nose was bloody and there was a bruise forming on his left temple. He was missing his cloak, skin icy. I took off my cloak feeling a draft of cold air brush against my neck. Goosebumps appeared and I shivered violently as I wrapped the cloak around him. "We need to go now okay? Russia...I know it's hard to believe but he saved me and Germany. And now we have to get out. So get up, come on," I tugged on his hand but he refused to budge.

"Come on! We don't have time!" I tugged harder but he shook his head furiously.

"No...we should just stay here. It's safer and...I can't–" he ripped his hand away, hugging himself.

Irritation bubbled within me. "How is this safer?! We're in the *fucking* Winter Kingdom and you call that safer? What happened to saving people?" I snapped, no longer caring if the guards could hear me.

"No...Poland you don't get it! The Tsar is right! We're safer here please..." America's tone was distressed.

I stilled, unable to believe my hearing. *Did he really just admit that...* "You can't just betray me like that!" panic was welling within me and I could almost hear Germany's voice begging me to hurry up. Dawn was beginning to break, the sound of birds chirping in the distance. "Please...not after what we've risked. We–you can't give up like this! It's not fair!" I argued, "Where the hell is your spark!"

America let out an empty cold laugh as he muttered, "It's gone. I realised–"

PIAK!

America looked at me in shock, one hand on his cheek. A red hand imprint was appearing on his face courtesy of me. "Did you just slap me?" he looked at me, something re-surfacing within his eyes. I couldn't help but smirk. *Bingo.* Sticking out my hand, I jerked my

head. "Ready now?" I asked him.

"..."

My smile wavered as my hand slowly lower– America grabbed my hand, pulling himself up. Cracking a grin, he ruffled my hair (much to my annoyance). "Come on, let's hurry," I grunted, shaking off his hand as I tried to hide my smile.

*

"Good, just in time," Germany sighed when he spotted me, tense shoulders relaxing. The others were behind him including an unfamiliar woman–Kazan I guess–and Ukraine. She looked tired, hair sticking out in odd directions but she had a smile on her face. "Poland! America!" she waved to us. America didn't say a word but only raised a hand in response. Her smile waned as if the realisation dawned on her. America made his way over to a sullen Canada who barely responded to America's pestering. The others' restrictors were off but they were silent. Singapore's eyes were lifeless in comparison to Italy's eyes which were blazing with pent up anger.

"Kazan, could you help unlock America and Poland's restrictors?" Germany asked, tapping his foot against the ground.

Kazan frowned in America's direction, lips pursed. No doubt she had to be wondering about his injuries but it seemed like she didn't want to bring it up. Instead, she motioned for us to hold out our arms. Unlocking them carefully, the restrictors fell to the ground as power coursed through me. "Ohhhh that feels good," America grinned, clenching and unclenching his hand, sparks flying.

Coughing to regain our attention, Kazan looked at us solemnly. "I'll be quick. The bags with your supplies are already loaded onto the carriages which are in the stable. I've also gotten you a more detailed map of the Kingdom should you choose to use it. Once you've done a check of everything, leave. I've managed to get the stableboys to run me an errand but they'll be coming back soon," she warned. Germany nodded as he thanked Kazan for her help. She smiled ruefully as she murmured, "Just...be safe.

"We will. Don't worry too much Kazan," Ukraine smiled, hugging her.

Kazan nodded, eyes glassy as she motioned for us to leave. "Wait! But aren't you going to get into trouble for helping us?" I asked. She cracked a smile, shaking her head. "His Excellency Knyaz Russia has already made plans. And even if I do get caught, it will be worth it," she shrugged non committedly.

"You can come with us?"

Another shake of her head. "Even if I wanted to, I have too much of an obligation to stay here. Who else will patch up their Excellencies?" she told me before somberly adding, "Physical wounds caused by the Tsar and Moscow do not heal nicely on their own."

Ukraine looked down, rubbing her left hand, face stony. Germany sighed and nodded as he instructed us to head out. We trailed behind him, Ukraine bringing up the rear as Kazan's figure receded into the distance. *Thank you.*

Walking down a worn path, we finally reached the stables. For a palace filled with treasures and a crazy amount of decor, the stables were unkempt, ramshackle almost. Despite that, I was elated to see Egypt's carriages still intact, supplies piled on the racks attached to it. "Singapore, Canada get the horses, the rest of us let's check the carriages. America, J–I mean Ukraine and Italy you'll be with Canada. Poland, Japan and I will be with Singapore," Germany ordered us. America took a step forward but I shook my head. He grimaced but didn't make any other move aside from pointing his fingers at Germany and then back at his eyes.

Singapore and Canada made their way into the stables while the rest of us hurried to inspect our transportation. Halfway through it, the horses were brought out. Singapore tried to attach the harness of the horses but failed each time. I helped him, noticing his shaky hands. "I...thanks," he muttered, not quite looking at me as he spoke. I nodded and patted his head. He smiled shakily but his eyes were still dull.

"Let's move!" Germany hollered, clambering into the driver's seat. His out-spoken attitude surprised me but I suppose it was the essence of time. "Japan, are you okay to be a co-driver?" he asked. Japan nodded as she took a seat next to him. America and Italy took the reins of their own carriage while the rest of us piled into our own carriages. A snap of the reins and we were off. I peered out of the windows as the sun began to shine brightly down on the kingdom. There was a yell and I gasped when I saw 2 guards chasing after us.

"Germany?" I squeaked, peeking my head out of the window only to duck it back in when an ice spear grazed my face. "HANG ON!" he yelled and I heard the snap of reins as the carriage picked up speed. Singapore clung to the side of the carriage, eyes wide. There was the faint sound of bickering before Japan shouted, "Fine! But you owe me one Ger-money!" *Germany owes Japan what now?*

Suddenly a blinding light filled the entire carriage. I felt my skin freezing off as my eyes burned. When they finally regained their vision, we were in a dark and cold place. *Where are we?* The smell of wet soil filled the carriage interior, the soft ribbiting of frogs in the near distance filling the silence. If you listened hard enough, you could hear the wails of women though that could have just been me. The carriage had slowed down considerably, the horses' hooves a constant reminder that I was in fact very much alive.

"What...what is this place?" Singapore murmured, peering out of the window.

"I don't know, it feels familiar...but then again all woods feel the same don't they?" something about this place made my brain tingle yet I didn't know why. The carriage rolled to a stop and I heard a loud smack before the carriage doors opened.

"Out," Japan's voice was sullen. I hopped out of the carriage first as my feet landed in something squishy. *Yuck.* Singapore followed, wrinkling his nose. Something about this place felt oppressive, like it bore a deep burden. Germany's face was unreadable, eyes hooded. We stood in a circle, an air of solemnity around us. We must have looked like a funny bunch, dressed in cloaks with scruffy appearances save for Ukraine. No one spoke but yet we seemed to

have a conversation with each other.

Where are we?

What just happened?

Are we seriously free?

Why did Russia let us run off?

When is this going to be all over?

"Germany, where are we? How...how did we get here even?" I asked cautiously, breaking the delicate silence.

He sighed, looking straight at me, "Welcome to the Kingdom of Darkness. Enjoy your stay."

Translations:

какого черта!--What the hell!

Зеркальный зал,--Hall of mirrors

Королевские покои.--Royal Chambers

Не могу поверить, что мы продолжали оставаться друзьями.--I can't believe we continued to be friends.

A/N:

***creeps out of the dirt cautiously, hands raised* Hi...it's been a while hasn't it? Hehe...**

In all seriousness, I've been busy with school and other commitments (and breaking away from some people) so I haven't got much time to write. My apologises if this chapter is shitty and too fast paced TnT. For the writing short stories, expect it come out in a couple days.

Yea...I may or may not go another long period of not posting--

;-; *sobs in pain*

NOW ON TO THE CHAPTER AND YAPPITY-YAP WE GOOOOOO! Guess what? We're also done with Act 2!!! AT LONG LAST WHEEEEEEE

I can't wait to write about Russia's POV cause that's the next one! That's the "break chapter" :D

I wonder why he remembered everyone...

As for Japan...something isn't right...

Y'all gimme ur guesses >:)

Alright, I'm not gonna yap anymore so see you soon!

Семья (Family)

[image]

1 week ago...

Russia's head was aching for a couple days now. At first he attributed it to poor posture (something the Tsar had been pestering him to correct for years now) but it didn't seem to be the case. And then came the voices. Whispering in the hallways, in the classroom and at the dining table. Wherever he went, they followed him. Even in his dreams, he could see the faint outline of...someone. Someone familiar...but who?

That was the question he asked himself as he sat at the dining table with his siblings. Belarus poked at her food, disgust apparent on her face. It was cabbage stew once more, food had become a bit more scarce ever since they'd been locked in the school. Most days, all the chefs could cook were simple meals since most of the other ingredients were imported from the other kingdoms.

"It's so watery..." Belarus whined, "Why can't they make those *heavenly* mash potatoes? Oh my god how I want those..."

"Shut up Bela, at least be grateful you have food," Russia growled, glaring at his sister. She shrunk back, looking down at her lap. His irritability had also grown out of control in recent days though he wasn't sure if it was due to a lack of sleep. "Not everyone gets to choose what they can eat," he continued, taking a sip of his stew–if it could be called that. Silently, he did agree that it had become watery but food was food.

We eat what we are given. That was the Tsar's motto and the first lesson Russia remembered learning. The Tsar never let him leave the table if he never finished his food and Russia remembered staying there for almost 4 hours once when he was 4 all because he refused to finish *just* a piece of carrot. Of course, he did find it a bit hypocritical that they didn't eat peasant food considering that the

rest of the kingdom was often left starving but who was he to complain? Eating *good* food was a luxury royals had.

"Say...doesn't it feel like someone's missing?" Kazakhstan spoke up uncharastically, staring at the empty spot next to Russia.

Russia turned to look, grimacing. *So I'm not the only one*. "China's busy which probably explains the emptiness," he shrugged. Kazakhstan nodded although he continued to frown. Russia tried to ignore the growing ache in his head as he ate his food. It felt like someone was pressing against his skull, mushing it. Dots appeared in his vision and he felt light headed as he swayed in his seat.

"Russia?" Belarus looked at him in concern, "Are you okay? You're pale."

"I...I'm fi..." his eyeballs rolled up in his head as he fell off his seat. The last thing he remembered before falling into unconsciousness was him being held up by a pair of strong arms.

*

Darkness.

Brightness.

Darkness.

Brightness.

Russia winced as the bright lights pierced his cornea. "Ugh..." he groaned as he tried to sit up only to be gently pushed back down. Turning his head, he saw a red figure through his blurry vision. "Who...wha...?" he winced, tongue heavy.

"It's me. China," the figure said calmly, "I'm gonna find WHO. Don't get up." Then, he walked off. Russia continued to lay in bed, staring at the ceiling with dull eyes as he tried to remember the events that led him here. *Bela...China wasn't at dinner...I felt faint...* His breath hitched and he jolted upright. "Ukraine," he whispered in shock. How could he forget her? His *rebellious* younger sister, the one who always went against his every directive. A chilling cold filled

Russia's entire being, extinguishing any feelings. *Numb.*

"Russia!" China dashed over, panic clear in his eyes, "I told you to lay down! Aiya, why don't you ever listen to me!" *Numb.*

Behind China was WHO, who was pushing a medical cart. "China calm down," she laughed. *Numb*. It was like his feelings were blocked behind a frosted glass wall. He knew they were there but he couldn't tell what they were. "Russia, did you hear me?" WHO's worried face filled his vision.

Russia's voice seemed to get caught in his throat and no matter how much he tried, nothing worked. "Russia, are you okay?" China asked, hard features softening. *Numb*. *Numb. Numb.* The world swirled and he felt his body sway. The faint yells of WHO and China rang in his ears but they were so...very...far...away...

*

Russia's eyes snapped open and he found himself back in his room. Not the dorm that was for sure, this room was far too decorated. The ceiling was extremely high, with ornate little paintings decorating it. A large chandelier hung from above, the glass panels glinting in the sunlight that streamed through sheer curtains.

"Where am I..." he muttered while getting up from a *ridiculously* soft bed. (It was like pudding. How did anyone expect him to get out of it easily?) *KNOCK! KNOCK!* The door opened to reveal a girl dressed in a simple green gown. Her figure was faint, flickering in and out of his sight. *Ukraine,* his mind supplied for him.

"Apologies for the sudden intrusion dearest brother. I'm only here to deliver Father's request for your presence at the Great Hall. He's called all of us there," Ukraine said. Russia furrowed his brows, as he nodded slowly. Why was Ukraine–his most annoying sibling–suddenly so courteous? Things weren't adding up...

"You don't remember me do you?" Ukraine asked suddenly just as she was leaving.

Russia froze as he watched her figure flicker back and forth. She

sighed and rolled her eyes, muttering something under her breath. Pulling out a large photo album from what appeared to be thin air, she tossed it to him. He grunted as it landed on his legs. "Go through it. You'll probably start recollecting things sooner or later," she said, tone becoming much more like her usual self. *What was her usual self like even?* Russia couldn't recall entirely but everything seemed to come to him instinctively.

As she turned to leave for good, he blurted out, "Why are you doing this? After...I don't remember entirely but I know you and I hate each other so why? Why help me?"

Ukraine smiled–a genuine one–chuckling. "This is so unlike you, Russia. Had a change of heart I see," she teased.

Russia grumbled, looking away. "No! I'm just confused! There's something attached to this right?" he narrowed his eyes.

His sister's smile faded away and she stared at him solemnly. "Brother, we may hate each other but family is family. And trust me, not everything is as it seems. Now if you'll excuse me, I must leave." with a swish of her dress, she shut the door.

Russia stared down at the album. Its cover was a dark red and in gold were the words: *Memories*. Hesitantly, he opened it up, Ukraine's ominous words echoing in his mind. The first page was a photo of him and his younger siblings. His youthful face stared back at him, ushanka tilted. He couldn't have been more than 7 years old. Ukraine clung onto him, grinning. Belarus was tugging on his coat not looking at the camera. Surrounding them were his other three siblings: Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, swaddled in thick blankets, eyes shut.

He flipped through the pages, a strange feeling in his chest. As he looked through the album, he noticed how he and Ukraine's distance with each other began to widen. And with each passing photo, he began to see the smile on his face begin to tighten and then wane.

Turning to the last photo, he felt his breath hitch. There was a tickle in his brain and he shut his eyes. The photo shown was of

Ukraine in the same exact green dress kneeling on the ground, head bowed. His father was in front of her, an enraged look on his face. He wasn't in the photo but the way the photo was in grey struck him. It was like...like...

The tickle had become a throb and he groaned, clutching his head. *What is it about this photo?* Each time he tried to pin something down to the photo, it seemed to slip away from him. He *knew* he'd been there. There was something about this photo–*something important.*

"What is it?" he murmured.

And then it hit him.

His father stood before his sister, a cold expression on her face. Ukraine's face was taut, unshed tears welling in her eyes. There was a bruise forming on her face. Russia found himself at his throne, red ropes binding him to it. They seemed to be the only colour visible aside from his father's figure.

*"You want to have freedom?" his father's voice was hoarse. Probably from screaming everyday and those cigars he smoked. (*He never liked his father's bad habit–not that he'd say anything about it.*)*

Ukraine's hands trembled as she stared at the ground. "Yes...father," she murmured.

CRACK!

Ukraine fell to the ground, clutching her face. His father towered over her, unbridled rage in his eyes. Russia opened his mouth but it was like there was a gag on him. ***STOP IT! STOP HURTING HER!*** *He wanted to scream but the words wouldn't come out. His siblings sat quietly, backs ramrod straight, expressions blank. Around their wrists were similar red ropes binding them to their seat.*

He tugged against them but to no avail. All he could do was watch Ukraine get hit over and over again. He winced each time he heard Ukraine's whimpers of pain. Finally after what felt like forever, his father stopped and took off his gloves which were stained with blood.

*Ukraine laid on the ground, prone. "I'll give you what you want, my **dearest** daughter. From now on, you will henceforth be removed from the royal family tree. You are no longer bound to the royal court," his father's voice was strangely calm but that didn't nullify the impact of his words.*

Russia's eyes widened as a horrible pain wracked his head. He screamed. "SOM–"

"RUSSIA WAKE UP!"

He jolted upright in bed, panting. China was holding onto his hands, face pale. "Russia, it was *just* a bad dream. You're okay. You're okay," he felt himself being pulled into a hug. Long fingers carded through his hair and he allowed himself to relax, shutting his eyes. "Shhh, you're okay," he murmured.

"I forgot her Chi...I forgot..." Russia found it hard to breathe at the new revelation.

"Who? Bela? She's fine," China asked.

"No! Ukraine! I...I forgot her...my sis–"

"Are you okay?" China pulled away, looking at his friend strangely, "Ukraine? Who's that?"

Russia stilled as he stared back at China. "You don't remember her? Ukraine? My sister, the one I'm always fighting with...you don't...you don't..."

"I'm calling WHO. *Stay* here," China muttered worriedly as he left.

Russia stared at the wall, his heart pounding. How had he forgotten? Was there some sort of trick going around? *Is Ukraine even...SHE HAS TO BE. I REMEMBER HER SO–* WHO entered the room, China trailing behind her worriedly.

"Russia, it's me, Nurse WHO. China told me you recalled someone?" she looked at him, brows furrowed. He hated it. He hated how she looked at him like *he* was sick. He wasn't! The whole damn world was!

"Yes! Ukraine! She's my sister, you can check your files. I swear—"

WHO placed a hand on his shoulder as she took a seat on his bed. "Russia, I think your mind is creating false memories after the impact of your fall. Ukraine...whoever she is...she doesn't exis–"

"What?" Russia's voice was quiet and he glared at her, "What the hell is that meant to mean?!"

"Russia calm down. You're disorientated and–"

"NO! YOU DON'T GET IT! SHE...I FORGOT HER YOU– UGH!" Russia grabbed his head as he screamed in frustration. His mind was a whirlwind and nothing made sense. Why did no one remember his sister? She *was* real. He was sure of that. How else could he explain his memories? They were *so* vivid. You couldn't fake that right?

As if WHO had heard his thoughts, she murmured gently, "Russia, head trauma *can* result in false memories. And they can be very very vivid in some cases. I'm sorry but Ukraine doesn't exist at all. I can check the records but there'll be nothing on her."

"But-"

"Russ, give it up," China interjected, "You need the rest. Maybe after you rest, everything will be clearer." He surveyed Russia, a crease on his ever so calm face. Russia hated it. He hated everything. He wasn't a weakling. Why did his best friend look at him like he was?

He wanted to argue further but something stopped him. *Don't rush it. Calm down.* ASEAN's voice echoed through his mind. *Huh? What...* A memory of gold flickered in his mind before extinguishing. *How much have I forgotten?* Taking a deep breath, he forced out a smile and nodded. "I...I guess you're right. I'm sorry for my behaviour," he replied softly.

"It's fine Russia. I'll check in on you later but just rest now okay? China, let's leave okay?" WHO said, getting up. Russia laid back down, his eyes tracking their movements as they left him alone. Once he was sure they'd left, he swept off the blankets and slipped out of the bed. There had to be proof of his sister's existence. He'd

find it. No matter what he had to do. Russia wasn't one to easily give up.

*

He snuck out of the infirmary, leaning against the wall for support. *You can do it. You've had it worse.* He gritted his teeth as he forced himself to walk. Luckily for him, the hallways were quiet, moonlight streaming through the windows. He staggered through the hallways, allowing his legs to lead him to the staff quarters.

ASEAN. The teacher's name was embossed on the door's silver plate in cursive. Russia paused, leaning against the nearby pillar. Did he really want to do this? He had a hunch–it was only a hunch–but something told him that all the missing memories had to do with ASEAN.

Knock! Knock! The sound echoed through the hallways and for a moment Russia contemplated running away. He had no proof! And anyways, didn't ASEAN have absolutely no ability whatsoever?

ASEAN opened the door shortly after. Bleary eyes stared at Russia, hair sticking out unlike his usual slicked back hairstyle. "What are you doing here at this hour Russia?" ASEAN yawned, "Aren't you supposed to be in your dor-"

"You did something didn't you?" Russia asked quietly.

To a normal person, ASEAN would have looked like he remained calm but Russia had spent a lot of time analysing people. A trait the Tsar had instilled in him. Not his father. There was a difference. *Is there?* A small voice questioned. Russia stuffed it away, hiding it in the dark crevices of his mind.

Yes. There was. The Tsar was ruthless while his father was kind. At least he...Ukraine's incident was different. That was a father angry at his daughter...right? *They are two different people*, Russia reassured himself, repeating the mantra.

"Russia, I did nothing. Now, please go back to your dorm or else I'll have to write you up. And I can tell you with all honesty, I don't

want to do that. We're having it hard enough as it is," ASEAN sighed, running a hand through his hair. Russia glared at him, arms crossed.

"You erased my memories of my sister! So don't you dare say you didn't do anything!" he snapped, anguish crossing his face, "How else do you explain...goddamnit!" He kicked the door frame, letting out a strangled yell.

ASEAN stilled before grabbing Russia and slamming the room door behind him. Forcing Russia to sit on the couch, he entered a room and Russia heard a boy's voice before ASEAN murmured something. Looking around the space, Russia noted that there were several different photos hanging on the wall. They were mainly of his children though he spied one of a younger ASEAN and a tall man. *I wonder...*

ASEAN took a seat in front of Russia, the moonlight casting a shadow across his face. He switched on the light but that didn't seem to soften the hardened features on his face. If anything, it only served to magnify the number of greying hairs on ASEAN's head. There was guilt in his eyes–or maybe it was anger–as he played with his fingers.

"Russia...I'm sorry but you have to understand me...look things are complicated and some things I can't say but–"

"I don't get it. How did you erase her...from everyone's memory? No one can do that anymore. The last guy who–" Russia's blood turned cold as he stared back at his teacher. "Wait...there's no way–"

ASEAN sighed as he muttered a couple choice words under his breath. "I'm the son of the last user. Adopted son," he interjected. Russia stared, unable to comprehend. *But...but...how...it doesn't...ability passing?* "I didn't want to do it Russia but I *had* to," ASEAN continued desperately.

"Why?" Russia asked hoarsely, "Why did you erase...you're not supposed...why?" He couldn't find the words to express himself. Every time he tried to speak, it would get lost in the sea of his tumultuous thoughts. ASEAN placed a hand on his shoulder,

perhaps offering a silent apology.

They sat in silence as Russia reeled from the information overload. ASEAN sighed after a long time, breaking the silence. "I suppose I owe you an explanation don't I?" he said, leaning back in his seat. Russia glared daggers at him before muttering, "No shit."

ASEAN pointedly ignored Russia and dragged a hand across his face. "To put things simply, Ukraine left with others. Remember the monster Headmaster UN talked about?" he asked. Russia nodded slowly as he recollected what had happened that day.

He'd been arguing with Ukraine and...someone. There'd been a fight and then...

His eyes widened and he grabbed ASEAN by his collar. "What the hell? You erased my memories of others too?! How many of them and who? Why do I only remember Ukraine? WHAT DID YOU DO TO ME!" he hissed. *Nothing is as it seems.* Only now did Ukraine's words make sense. How much was the school hiding? How much was ASEAN hiding?

"Russia like I've said, it was necessary! The situation of Apophis isn't going to resolve on its own. UN can pretend like everything's going to be fine but do you really trust him?" ASEAN argued as he pried Russia's hands away.

Russia clenched his fists, gritting his teeth as he fell back into his seat. ASEAN was right–as much as he wanted to deny it–UN's optimism was just futile hope. He knew it himself but...but... "It doesn't explain why you let her go! And with who?!" he asked.

"Singapore, Poland, Italy, Canada, Germany and...America," ASEAN whispered the last name, so soft that if Russia hadn't been listening, it would have gone past his ears. Russia barely contained himself from yelling (though he wasn't sure why he would. He couldn't remember anyone.) by biting his tongue. "What?!" he hissed through gritted teeth.

"You. A *teacher*. Let Ukraine go out with a bunch of...of..." Russia felt tears come to his eyes and he desperately tried to hold them

back. Unfortunately for him, they fell one by one and before he knew it, he lost control of the dam holding back his emotions.

He cried and cried. What he cried for would only be known to him. Perhaps it was for forgetting his sister. Perhaps it was for realising how much he still cared for his sister. Or maybe it was simply out of frustration.

He didn't know how long he spent crying but he was vaguely aware that ASEAN was hugging him throughout. When he finally managed to calm down, sobs turning to hiccups and soft gasps, he slumped against his teacher, tired.

"Russia..." ASEAN murmured softly.

"Y'know I hate you a lot now right?" Russia muttered, pulling away.

ASEAN smiled grimly, looking away. Russia wiped his face with his sleeve, embarrassment starting to creep upon him. The Tsar's voice echoed in his mind and he flinched. *Failure. You aren't meant to show emotion.* He scratched his wrist nervously, biting his cheek. *Get a hold of yourself Russia.*

"How much can you recall now?" ASEAN asked gently.

Russia shut his eyes as he tried to remind himself of what *really* happened. Not just some *made-up* memories his math teacher (who apparently had a hidden ability no one knew about!) had created in his mind. He searched around a little before his eyes snapped open.

"I remember everyone...but how?" he whispered. *Germany, Poland, Italy, Japan...even that bastard America and his twin Canada.* Even Singapore–from the rare times he had seen the kid hanging out with China. Though Singapore would always run off when he saw Russia.

ASEAN sighed in relief as he replied, "I suppose your mind, now that it's aware of what's been going on, is slowly distancing itself from the false memories."

"You didn't do anything to me?" Russia narrowed his eyes. ASEAN raised his hands, shaking his head. "At max, I only tried to reduce the–I call it fog–I only tried to reduce the fog surrounding your

original memories. If anything, it's only a push to nudge you in the right direction. I would release your memories if I could but unfortunately it's not something within my control. It'd break your sanity."

Russia groaned, sinking into his seat. The clock ticked away slowly, counting down the hours till sunrise. And there would be everyone: Kaz, Bela, Chi, Northie...none of them would recall his sister. They'd go about his day while he...he...

"I need to go after her," Russia blurted out, "Wherever she is, I need to help her!"

ASEAN's expression darkened and he immediately replied, "No."

"I don't think you get a say in this Professor ASEAN. Not after what you've done," Russia shot back.

ASEAN rose, running a hand through his hair. "I've said it again and again. It's dangerous. It's bad enough I've allowed *eight* students to run off–of which one is my *son*. I can't let anyone else go."

"So you expect me to remember all this and *suffer?*" Russia barked, fists curled as he rose.

"I'm not–"

"You're implying that."

The silence spoke volumes.

"You want me to sit here, pretend *everything's* fine and dandy while my *sister* is running off with what I remember to be mostly a bunch of hooligans," Russia's voice was ice cold. ASEAN gulped silently but squared his shoulders. "I can't let you leave. It's too risky and in any case, I won't even know where to let you start. Russia, please just listen to me. She made her choice and you need to respect that," he replied calmly.

Russia simply stormed out, anger clear on his face.

Fuck the school. Family was family. And if there was something

good Father had instilled in him, it was that you don't leave family behind. Even if you weren't on the greatest terms.

~~~

Russia sighed as he leaned against the cold wall of the dungeon, eyes shut. Sleep clawed at him but he knew he needed to get out fast. *Where would I go though?* Russia sighed, *stupidity at its finest.* Clearly it had slipped his mind about his escape plan. *I'm sure we have a couple hideouts...Old Winter still owes me a favour anyways.* Before he could even take a step forward, a guard stopped him. Time stopped as yells were heard and then–

Click. Russia's blood turned cold as he heard the familiar disappointed sigh of his– The Tsar.

"Welcome home...Russia."

A/N: IT'S BEEN LESS THAN A MONTH ERM YES! I WILL POST A SHORT STORY SOON AND THE WINNER'S ARTWORKS FOR THE 10K COMP.

How's been life treating you? For me, they've been kicking me in the ass :D I hope you liked this chapter though personally I don't. I wanted to add in a lot more things (eg. How Russia left) but I don't think this is a good part to put it in.

Heh, next chapter we will finally remember why tf the gang got into the forest of the KoD.

Big burst of writing energy for this story go boom boom!!!

[image]

How I honest to god felt finally WRITING AND FINISHING the chapter. (My friend is staring at me writing this--)

Anyways, here's a couple questions!
~~~

1) What do red threads represent for Russia and his siblings?

2) What are your theories as to why Russia recalled Ukraine?

3) Who hates Soviet here? Like in the story specifically.

4) Whose equally as ded or dying as I am?

Okay byeeeeeeeee

(also I submitted my final term creative writing project only to realise I DIDN'T PUT MY FUGGIN PAGE NUMBERS!!!!)

[image]

Exit

[image]

"Welcome to the Kingdom of Darkness. Enjoy your stay," I smiled grimly as everybody froze.

"How?!" America spluttered, "You've shitting me right? I mean there's no way! We were halfway across–"

"America you can't say anything. Your map reading skill of the land is horrible," Canada rolled his eyes, "We weren't that far although..." He trailed off, looking towards me and Japan. She was rubbing her temples, eyes shut. *The spell must have drained her quite a bit.* "Do you need to rest?" I whispered and she shook her head, reassuring me that she was fine. I frowned but didn't press further.

"Okay but seriously, how did we get here?" Italy cut in.

Silence. He raised an eyebrow, tilting his head at me. I stared back impassively, refusing to say a word. Call me petty but I was still quite annoyed with Italy for taking Poland's side. Maybe it was the sense of betrayal but I really wished he'd taken my side. It wasn't as if *he* hadn't killed his father for no good reason.

Italy continued to look at me through narrowed eyes. The tension was so thick that you could have cut it with a knife. After a while, Japan sighed, cracking open an eye. "You are *impossible* Germany," she hissed before raising her voice to get the group's attention. I cringed, rubbing the nape of my neck.

"Guys, it was me. I'm the one who brought us here," she told them, tiredness apparent in her voice.

"WHAT?!" America and Italy yelled simultaneously.

Japan shot them an irritated look and let out a groan, "Guys, a little

bit of consideration for my *splitting* headache?" They looked at her sheepishly, muttering a 'sorry'. Squeezing the bridge of her nose, she continued, "When we were getting chased earlier, I used a teleportation spell to get us here. It's not an easy spell–not when I have to transport a huge group like ours. If anything, it's draining so *please* stop yelling and decide on your next action so I can go and rest." The last bit was directed at me even though she never said out loud. The others–save for Italy–looked a bit shocked at the sudden revelation but nonetheless kept their mouths shut. (Honestly, I was half expecting them to yell again upon finding out about Japan's ability to teleport since she never told them–judging by their expressions.)

Japan sighed, leaning against me. "Germany, you *really* need to make a decision. No one is in a clear state of mind and I'm seriously going to pass out if you don't make a decision soon," she whispered, voice faint. I felt a stab of sympathy shoot through me and I patted her head.

"Okay," I whispered before raising my voice, "Guys!" Everyone turned to look at me again though America didn't hide his glare. *Oh for the love of– Can that guy not give me a break?* Shoving the thought aside, I continued, "We need to get out of the forest–"

"Yea, no kidding *Germs*," America sneered. I gritted my teeth, forcing myself not to act on any "intrusive thoughts" of mine. (Frankly that could have been East for all I know.) "Shhh...he's just trying to rile you up," West reminded me. *No kidding. Gods, I can't catch a break at all!* I grimaced inwardly before continuing.

"Japan's tired so I'll take the next shift with...Poland if that's okay. The other carriage, you can keep your original pairing. We'll follow the route the map shows and with luck we can get out of here by sunrise. And a couple things to note: Whatever you do, *do not* try to engage with any unfamiliar voices. I don't know what sorts of creatures lurk in the forests but I *know* some are evil spirits. Secondly, do not attempt to drive off the path of the first carriage which would be mine. I don't need anyone getting lost here. Finally, *always* listen to me. At least in this forest," I added the last part hurriedly, seeing America opening his (big fat) mouth, "None of you want to get lost or killed. Not here at least."

The others shifted uneasily and I saw Singapore grabbing his sleeves nervously. He whispered something to Poland who nodded. Walking up to me, Poland whispered into my ear, "Ger, can I swap with Singapore, I'm a little drained from...well yea. If that's okay with you of course." I could sense that there was a deeper reason behind him swapping but agreed anyway. There wasn't a use in fighting. Not now at least.

We piled back into our carriages, lighting up the lanterns (much to America's chagrin) and continued our journey through the forest. Behind us, I could hear America and Canada arguing. Probably over me. Or the situation. I didn't really care.

Singapore stared at the map, complete silent save for when he asked me to make turns. I didn't like it and it felt like he was mad at me all over again. I tried to keep quiet, reasoning to myself that perhaps he was still in shock. *Or he's still tired from the journey. Tired enough to not talk. Righttttttt, as if.*

"Are you mad at me?" I blurted out, unable to stand the silence any further. *Stupid stupid stupid-*

"Huh?" Singapore looked at me, blinking slowly as if coming out of a trance, "Wha...huh? I'm no– Ma– I'm not mad, wha– What makes you think that?"

"You're being awfully quiet."

"Oh," Singapore continued to look downwards and fiddled with his sleeves.

"Is everything alright?" I asked, shooting a concerned look at him.

"Er...yea, why wouldn't it be?" his voice was strained and I could hear the wince in it.

"I mean you got thrown into a dungeon and then..." I trailed off, unsure of how to continue the sentence. Singapore's face remained impassive though I could sense that he wanted to tell me something. He tugged on his sleeves and then his hair, body tensed up. After a moment, he exhaled, slumping in his seat. "I just

wonder...what would be different if I y'know...*hadn't* come along with you guys," he muttered, "I know I'd forget you but at least I'd be with my siblings and Papa but– Forget it, I'm tired and just rambling. Never mind what–"

"I don't blame you if that's what you're worried about. And...I owe you an apology. You didn't *need* to come and I'm selfish for not thinking about how you'd feel. You're what? 16. 16 and you already endured so much. It's not fair that I'm making you endure even more stress," I cut in, placing a hand tentatively on his shoulder. His figure was hunched, eye bags illuminated by the lanterns. He looked like a zombie.

"It's not your fault. It's mine, I made the choice and I shouldn't regret it. I'm just being...unreasonable and I'm sorry for bothering you. We should focus on the road. Er...there's a left turn up front at the next fork," he fumbled for the map, squinting in the dim lighting. "It's a right turn Singa," I murmured softly, slightly surprised at how his nickname had slipped out of my mouth.

"Ah, I must've seen wrong, sorry. So we should– Hey, give me back the map!" he protested when I gently removed the map, setting it on my lap.

"Look, I can handle driving and reading the map perfectly fine, just sleep first. You're clearly too tired to guide me properly. I'll wake you up in a while, okay?" I told him. Perhaps my tone had come off harsher than I expected for he looked a bit dejected. Hurriedly adding, "You can help me later okay? Just rest now."

"I don't want to," there was a raw vulnerability in his voice. His head hung low as he continued shakily, "If I do– If...I can't Germany. I- I can't."

"Nightmares?" I asked.

There was no reply.

Turning to look at Singapore, I was surprised to see that his hands were shaking uncontrollably. Reaching over to grab one of them, I was taken aback at how cold and clammy they were. His face was

pale, eyes unseeing. "Singapore, what's going on?" I asked warily.

He didn't reply, breathing quickening as he shook his head, murmuring in a language I was unable to comprehend. I tried to focus on the road but Singapore's situation seemed far more dire. Biting my lips, I leaned forward pet one of the horses' rump. They slowed down slightly. "I'm going to let go so I need you to try and keep steady okay?" I told them gently and they neighed in reply. Hopefully it meant 'yes'. Cautiously, I released my grasps on the reins and allowed the horses to walk on their own. Now with my worries about driving set aside, I could focus on Singapore.

"Singa, where are you now?" I asked him, grasping one of his hands.

"Dun...dunge– It's cold and he's sta– I can't– Please no–" Singapore shut his eyes, tears forming as his voice cracked, "*Tolong hentikan*..."

My heart dropped as a wave of protectiveness washed over me. "Singa, listen to me. Whatever you're seeing. It *isn't* real. You're sa– you're in good hands okay? You're not in the dungeon. You're sitting on a carriage now, going to exit a forest. Singa, do you hear me?" I shook him gently as I rubbed circles on his back. He gasped for air softly as he shook his head, burying it into the crook of my neck.

"I...Mal– We...he's coming back...no- No! I didn't- Papa– *Tolong, tolong berhenti!*" he cried.

"Germany, is everything alright?" Canada called out from behind, scaring Singapore who clutched my cloak tighter, "I'm hearing some sobbing."

Shit. "Er...yea! All's good! We're exiting the forest soon!" I yelled back (perhaps my voice was a bit shaky but no matter) nervously. Judging by the lack of reply, I presumed Canada had chosen to leave the issue as it was. I hoped.

Turning my attention back to the sobbing boy in my arms, I continued to rub circles in his back. He whimpered, muttering something about how he was a "good boy". Something in me snapped as I forced him to stare at me in the face.

"Singapore, listen to me! You're safe here. Okay? So snap the hell out of whatever you're in!" I snapped, steel in my voice.

He didn't reply (expected to be honest) but his whimpering had stopped as his breathing slowed. I whispered soft words of reassurement as I continued to hug him. After a while, he finally calmed down enough and removed himself from my arms.

Wiping away his tears, he hiccuped, curling in on himself. "Are you okay?" I whispered when he flinched from my touch. *Did I over-do it?* "Certainly," East snickered. West 'tched.' at him, reassuring me I'd done right. Or at least I hoped she was being truthful.

Singapore's gaze was downwards and he murmured softly, "I'm sorry Germany. I...that was so fucking pathetic of me."

"No it wasn't. Singa, you really need to be kinder to yourself. Your reaction is fine. The things you went through aren't and you're just reacting to it. It's *normal*," I emphasised, frowning. (To be very honest, I didn't know what had gotten into me all of a sudden. It was like "BAM!". I suddenly became a motivational speaker.)

Singapore sniffled as he wiped his face with the hem of his cloak. "Goddamnit, I was fine and then we got thrown into the dungeon. Gods I hate this. I hate this!" he pulled at his hair, sobbing trying to be suppressed. It was as if he thought that pulling on his hair could tug out the horrible memories of his childhood. That made me feel guilty.

"Stop pulling your hair. It's not going to help you. Singa..." I gently took his hands, holding onto them. He struggled for a bit before giving up. Slumping against the seat, he whispered, "I hate myself. I shouldn't act...I- Germany, I don't want to be like this anymore...goddamnit..."

"I hate you so much."

Translations:

Tolong hentikan...--Please stop...

Tolong, tolong berhenti!--Please, please stop! (I dunno why it's

different)

A/N: WHOOOOOO ACT 3 is hereeeeeeeeee!!!

Much apologies if this chapter sucks- I absolutely am thinking my writing abilities are going to absolute hell right now.

Little life update: After I posted the April Fools chapter, I managed to fall sick with fever and then for the entire week was sick with a fluctuating temperature (It was 39ºC at one point heh). I'm like *so* amazing gang~

Anyways, I'm better now but I'm still hacking my lungs. But that won't stop me from writing! >:D

Here's a random drawing I drew the other day!

[image]

My cousin convinced to make me draw this Sigma- Sorry Miku >:D

Also, when looking at song recs for BbD's Spotify playlist, guess what I found?

[image]

Yea...I dunno-

I should draw Germany in Elsa's dress one day ahhhhhhhhh

Okay, I'm rambling again. So that signalssss:

QUESTION TIME!

1) Gang, who should I draw next?

2) Is Germany a Sigma?

3) Should I post the first chapter of my next book?

Alright my sigmas (the brainrot is getting to me), I'm just gonna find a nice ditch to lie down in and y'all have fun aight?

Goodbyeeeeeeeee!

dives into the ditch

The Downfall

[image]

"I hate you so much," Singapore muttered. His hands were clenched so tightly and I had no doubt that his fingernails were probably digging into the flesh.

"Ooh, that's gotta sting," East chuckled much to my displeasure, "I guess your–"

"Cut it out East," West interjected, "You can drop your little mean charade."

"Who says it's a charade?"

"*East...*"

I rubbed my temples, grimacing internally at their bickering. I'd nearly forgotten the pain of them and now it was all coming back. Though...there was something not quite right with East's voice. It was...sharper, more biting. *But that can't be...East was stopped from transforming wasn't he?* A shiver went down my spine and I swallowed nervously. *But we're in Apophis's domain now aren't we?* That thought was not comforting in the slightest. Egypt's amulet/chain thing was still clasped tightly on my neck and I could feel the slight warmth of it against my skin. It was comforting. Safe.

"It's too bad that the stupid woman gave you that amulet. You'd be so much stronger if you took it off you know?" the...Apophis's words echoed in my mind.

Surely that...thing was kidding. I could hardly control my powers anyways. If anything, the amulet was probably some charm thing that would– Honestly at this point, what did I really know? *Nothing.* The word stung me and I bit my cheek. A sharp pain sparked my senses as I tasted iron. I heard a dark chuckle and for a moment, in the shadows I could see a faint–

"Germany?" a soft voice pulled me out of my thoughts. Turning to face the source, I was met with clouded ruby eyes. I felt a sense of discomfort but forced a smile on my face. (Yes, I could be trusted with *that*. After all, forcing smiles was something I was good at.)

"Yea?" too high-pitched.

"I'm sorry. I...I don't– I don't–"

"I know," I murmured.

Singapore had a guilty look on his face as he continued, "Sometimes...I say things I shouldn't say. Sorry if I hurt your feelings."

I nodded in understanding despite the heavy feeling in my chest. Before I could stop myself, I replied, "It's fine. I'm used to it." Silence. My eyes widened as I tried to find a way to salvage the sentence. *Stupid stupid stupid!* Singapore's expression had gone back to its previous unreadable state much to my dismay.

Sitting in a fragile silence, I struggled to find the right words. How did one recover from such a major mess? Shifting his gaze, Singapore had curled in on himself, eyes dull and guarded. I didn't like that look one bit. Not on him or anyone for that matter. I'd seen that look far too many times as a child growing up during the war. While life was made as normal as it could be for me, it wasn't that easy to hide the servants' tiredness nor their dazed expressions. Berlin especially.

In the moments he didn't have to attend to me, I often saw his light-hearted expression being replaced by something far more sorrowful. Just like Singapore, he had worn a haunted gaze as he seemed to become a shell of himself. I didn't exactly understand why he acted like that at the time but in the years that followed, it soon dawned on me. It was protection.

The words I wanted to tell him were jumbled in my throat. Was I to apologise? Or did I try and change the topic? *What should I do?* Singapore shifted, hair falling slightly to cover his face. It was longer, reaching mid-neck. *He's probably not cut it in ages.* Without

thinking, I reached out, only for him to flinch away. My hand dropped back to my side as I profusely apologised.

"Shit, s– So– sorry," I stammered, kicking myself mentally. I could hear East cackling maniacally while West tried to shush him. It didn't take a genius to notice the worried tone in her voice. Singapore relaxed slightly as he murmured, "Don't do that again. I don't like people to touch me when I'm..." The sentence was left unsaid but I understood what he was implying.

"I get it."

Singapore cracked a slight smile before falling silent. The air between us felt prickly and I couldn't help but fidget with the horse reins. The horses whined before falling silent as I adjusted my grip on them, holding the reins properly. The distant wails filled my ears and I shivered. *Banshees*. I didn't like that one bit. While the banshees living in the Kingdom of Darkness were benign creatures, their wails were not. They were the sirens of death. If you heard one, it signalled either you or your family's death.

"When do you think we'll exit the forest?" Singapore asked, looking down at the map.

"Hopefully soon. Maybe another half hour?" I estimated.

"I don't like this place," he muttered, observing the surroundings.

"Me neither..." the trees loomed over us, and I didn't like that one bit. It felt like they could crash down on us at any moment. Bats flew above us, disappearing into the trees and I swore for a moment I saw a large...ape creature swing from the trees. *Surely that can't be...*

"Why did you choose me to follow you guys?" Singapore asked softly.

My blood turned to ice as all words seemed to leave me. Stuttering, I tried to find the right answer but it all came out in a jumble of words. Singapore looked at me, frowning. My head hung low as I sighed, trying to collect myself. After a moment, I replied quietly,

"We needed someone from the Kingdom of Silk and...well I trust you."

"Do you regret it?"

"Yea I do."

"Oh," Singapore looked down at his lap, frowning.

"It's not in the way you're thinking. I regret bringing you along because you're too young to experience this. I didn't keep my promise to ASEAN. You've been through so much and yet here I am bringing you to more danger and trauma. I mean what kind of senior am I?" I let out a snort before softening my expression, "Singa, I'm so sorry for being selfish. We–*I* should have just left you at the academy with your family. It would have spared you so...so much...pain." My voice cracked at the end and I found a tear rolling down my face.

Singapore was silent, fiddling with his thumb. After a while he looked up at me, "I mean I made the choice didn't I?"

"Still–"

"I made the choice, Papa made the choice to let me go and...ultimately it's not all your fault Germany," he continued, not missing a beat, "So don't fe–be sorry. I don't think I would have liked forgetting who you and Poland were anyways." He cracked a smile (though forced). "I may not be your kingdom's citizen but you're my friend and fighting to save your kingdom is worth all the pain."

You're my friend. Three simple words but that was all it took to make me tear up. "Thank you," I croaked, quickly wiping my face. It wouldn't look good if I was seen tearing up over this. Singapore's smile was genuine now as he patted my shoulder. His gaze also seemed lighter, some of the darkness clearing from his eyes.

"I really hope we succeed," Singapore muttered.

"Hey, don't be so negative. We're dealing with my life, not just any random person's," I joked back.

"Alright Mr Pessimistic," he chuckled, rolling his eyes playfully.

"How dare you!" I mocked horror, eyes widening ever so slightly.

"It's–"

Crack!

Instant silence.

"What was that..." Singapore was barely audible, face pale.

CRACK! The horses shifted uneasily though they still kept going. "Germany? Did you hear the crack?" Canada asked from behind.

"Ye...yea!"

"What do you think it is?" he asked.

"I don't know but stay on guard. If we're lucky it could be a wild animal," I warned, eyeing my surroundings. I heard some murmuring from behind–presumably one of the twins telling Italy and Ukraine the situation. Tapping Singapore's shoulder, I instructed him to hold onto the map. Tapping against the carriage, I told the others to prepare their weapons and abilities.

CRACK!

"That's not a wild animal is it?" West murmured softly within my mind.

No, no it isn't... My heart was racing as I tried to search for signs of danger. There was none. *That can't be...*

"Oh Germany Germany, I *did* warn you before haven't I? I'll make you regret not joining me," East–*no, Apophis*–chuckled lowly. *What happened to East...* My eyes widened in horror, panic gripping onto me. A soft hum filled the forest as birds and bats flew from the trees into the sky.

"Germany, what's going on?" Singapore's voice was grave.

Swallowing, I answered shakily, "Apophis. He...he's here..."

"What? But h–"

A loud shriek cut him off as several tree branches started falling towards us. There was a chorus of screams as I swerved the carriage causing Singapore to nearly fall off. Canada must have done the same for I heard Italy's high pitched shriek.

Around us, the trees started to come to life, and I swore I could see faces on all of them. From the ground, roots shot out, as they grabbed onto the wheels. A sickening crack was heard as the horses neighed loudly. The reins snapped and they darted into the forest though I heard two sickening squelches in the distance. *Oh lord...*

The branches grabbed the carriage and Singapore and I tumbled onto the ground. A sharp pain enveloped my left arm and I let out a strangled cry. Canada's carriage had fallen to a similar fate, the horses on the ground, unmoving. There was a gaping hole in their neck. The branches holding the carriages slammed into the trees with brutal force, causing them to splinter. A hoarse scream ripped through my throat.

The others were unceremoniously thrown onto the ground, bodies a chaotic blur of colours as they hit the ground with a soft thud. Ukraine had managed to break their fall by summoning some flowers. Save for a few visible scrapes, they looked no worse for wear. *Thank god.*

If I could stop time, I would. At least I wouldn't be in such a predicament.

"GERMANY!" before I could react, Singapore was grabbed by the ankle by a tree branch. He shrieked, wrestling to free himself but to no avail. "SINGAPORE!" I tried to grab him but my fingers merely brushed against his shoes as the branches rose to the sky.

"Well, do you like my surprise?" Apophis's voice echoed in my mind and my features contorted.

"STOP BEING A COWARD! SHOW YOURSELF!" I whirled around,

barely avoiding a tree branch. It crashed into another trunk and the tree fell with a heavy thud, shaking the ground. Singapore screamed as he was swung about, now hanging by one leg upside down.

"GERMANY! WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?!" Japan yelled before looking up, eyes wide, "SINGAPORE?!"

"It's...it's the forest," I explained, "Apophis...I don't know how he– He's controlling the place...I don't–"

A blur of red and white flew past Japan, slamming into a tree. America scrambled over to his brother who laid on the ground, groaning. "Germany I swear to the gods..." he gritted out, shielding them away from the monstrous trees with a ring of fire.

"It's not him! It's Apophis! He's trying to stop us!" Japan shot back as she drew a dagger to slice at the roots. They shrieked, retreating into the ground.

"Play nice Germany. If you cut the wrong root you might just kill your little friend," Apophis chuckled as the branch holding Singapore lowered him slightly. I growled as I tried to leap towards Singapore but with one quick yank, he slipped out of my grasps again.

Shadows wrapped around my right hand before throwing them out to wrap around the nearby trees. There was a piercing shriek as I pulled the trees closer in a bid to lower Singapore. He was just barely out of reach but I didn't dare requinlish my grip. *I can't lose him.* "POLAND! GRAB SINGA!" I called out. He turned his head, eyes widening before dashing over. He sliced through several roots and slid under branches before kicking the root. It released its grip and he caught Singapore before rolling them away to safety. Flicking my hand, I pulled the trees nearer and with a satisfying crack, they crashed to the ground.

"Are you okay?" I scrambled over to Singapore who was being examined by Poland.

"He's got some abrasions and bruises but nothing's broken," Poland reported, "Dizziness?"

Singapore nodded his head but reassured us he could manage. I shared a look with Poland and he nodded, holding Singapore by the shoulder. "Stay with me," I warned, calling on more shadows to form a shield above us. Making our way to the centre of the battle, I expanded the shield to give us a brief respite.

"GUYS GROUP TOGETHER!" I yelled. The others rushed over, panting. "Germany, you better have a goddamn plan," Italy gritted as he ducked away from a stray branch. It smashed into the ground, splintering into several pieces. My body shook with effort to upkeep the shield.

"Not exactly but if I can upkeep this shield we can try and get out of here," my voice quavered. I was surprised I was still able to upkeep my abilities. For a moment I wondered if it had to do with me being back in my territory.

Singapore swayed, leaning heavily against Poland who shook his head. "This forest is going to force us to run. I don't think Singa's gonna make it," he argued back, slicing a stray root. Singapore mumbled a protest, shaking his head, "I can make it..." Another root tried to aim for Italy but Ukraine , stamped a foot on the ground as a circle of flowers grew beneath our feet. "It should slow the roots down for now," she told us. I gave her a thumbs up, gathering more shadows to reinforce the shield. The trees creaked violently as I flicked my hand downward to pull their shadows to my hand.

"I could carry him," Canada murmured, "I'm fast an–"

"Absolutely not!" America countered, "Don't forget your shoulder."

"I'll carry him," Japan volunteered, reaching out towards Singapore. Despite his weak state, he continued to protest furiously. "There's really no need," he insisted, struggling to stand upright, "I'm capable."

"Capable?! Come on Singa, stop being stubborn and just let me carry you," Japan sighed in exasperation, looping one of his arms over her shoulder though not without a struggle. He looked unhappy but a couple murmured words from Poland stopped him from struggling and he laid limply. Perhaps it was the shock but his

face looked far paler than earlier.

Suddenly, my gut lurched. The shield flickered once, then twice before vanishing with a hiss. Time seemed to slow as a branch tried to grab me before being burned by America. It sizzled away as a great screech filled the forest. The roots continued to grab at us and I spotted Ukraine stamping her feet repeatedly. Eventually we were backed into a corner and no matter how much I tried, the shadows just wouldn't respond. It was just...gone.

No. No. No! Why now?! "This is your consequence. You've hardly practiced with your abilities and now..." West trailed off and I felt shame fill my body. *This is all my fault.*

"Germany! The shield! Bring it back up!" America told me, burning away at the roots though his flames were weaker now.

"I can't," it was more of a whisper but it resounded through the forest all the same.

The air seemingly thickened as the branches and roots retreated. They coiled together, grotesquely, the mulch squelching between the wood as a serpentine form began to take shape. Everyone save for me braced themselves for another barrage of attacks. The head reared and roared at us before its eyes snapped open to reveal glowing purple.

"Well well well, has our little boy finally given up?" the serpent chuckled. All the air in my lungs was sucked out, my vision tunneling.

Apophis was in the flesh and East was gone.

A/N: I have a Bio test tomorrow, a chem test on Wednesday PLUS a bio competition. School is tiring and I'm an (self) overworked soul~

So what sensible choice does Eli make? Publish this chapter, and ignore the pile of papers next to her. (GuystrustIstudiedthisbeforehandandImsupertiredbecauseIfinishedtut

Everytime I look at the document for BbD, I start to see all my

plot holes and it makes me wanna cry. I swear, half of our characters might actually just be POOF--gone--in the re-write (if I even have energy to complete the re-write).

Also, I think someone mentioned I should draw Germany in Elsa's dress or something so here you have it!

[image]

(It's not very good...I need to redraw it next time)

I also drew this as my own version for what if these characters had no trauma :

[image]

I feel pretty good about this chapter and I guess it's because I got over my writer's block. If I don't add anything else suddenly...I'm assuming we're gonna end this story in...9-10 chapters?

That's quite fast-- Or maybe 12 if I add in more random shit. (I'm very likely off by like several chapters--)

But meanwhile, when I'm not working on BbD, I'm working on the next story which is already at 8000+ words with 3 chapters and one prologue. Here's a little excerpt and comic panel (but this is VERY MUCH subject to change):

"I was just thinking...*Pabbi* he used to tell me that this store is...it's more than *just* a bookstore. It's a place where people come because it reminds them of...*home*. I'm just thinking that maybe *she's* coming here cause she sees it as her home. Ya get what I'm saying?"

Of course Singapore did. There was an undeniable charm about The Inky Nook–something he wished the rest of Centrium City could

see–that dragged you towards the place. Or maybe it was just him. The coziness of the place with its wooden furnishes and the hum of light traffic always made the place feel safe. And safety was what Singapore desired the most during his teens. He didn't consider the house he stayed in with his parents and his brother to be *home*. It was far from it.

A shiver wracked his body as he recalled the judgemental stares of his parents. Though their faces were fuzzy, the way their eyes looked at him would never leave his memory. *Failure,* his father's voice rang crystal clear. Then there was his brother who'd sit silently, eyes downcast.

Leaving that hellhole had been the best decision he'd ever made.

-- Rememberance | Countryhumans AU

[image]

(I spent too friggin long on the stupid thing. Also can anyone tell how much I was avoiding drawing the country flags-) **It's been a while since I used colour pencils but I'm pretty impressed with my usage! The only issue is Singapore's hair cause I only had one red.**

I've also updated my Meet the Artist thingy!

[image]

So for those who haven't figured it out yet, yes, I'm from ASEAN (YESSSSSSSS) and apparently I grew 1 cm! (finally-- I went to the clinic from that time I was sick and the scale said I was 157 heheheheheheeheh)

Okay bye bye! Hope you liked the chapter and I'll see you guys soon :D

[image]

[image]

(My personal opinion on the Rememberance AU I'm writing. All

memes' words are mine.)

Sacrifices and Survival

[image]

Fear did not suit Germany's expression. It was far from natural and only meant that things were *extremely* bad. His eyes were wide, mouth agape as he stared at the monstrous wood...monster...thing. *Apophis...how?* My brain refused to believe that we were staring at it in the flesh.

"Well well well, has our little boy finally given up?" Apophis laughed, rearing its head. Two slits served as its eyes which were glowing a bright purple. Behind me, Italy gasped. "*Merda merda merda*," he cursed. Japan's eyes were narrowed and I saw her slowly reaching for her knife.

"WHAT DID YOU DO TO EAST?!" Germany screamed, lurching forward but America pulled him back, left arm ablaze with fire. His face was in a grimace but he managed to force out a cocky grin, "Don't Germany, let the expert handle it." Before Germany could reply, he continued.

"I'll only say it nicely once whatever-the-fuck your name is. Let my team and I go and we'll let you have your nice little forest untouched. Don't think I can't burn this place to the ground. You'll have nothing left."

Apophis chuckled as several branches swooped out to grab us. America burned them all but it was clear that his strength was waning. We backed further into the corner, trapped. Singapore's head was lolling forward and Japan was having a harder time keeping him upright. Apophis smiled, the branches creaking as it did so. "Do you really think burning this forest will do anything young prince? I'm *everywhere*. This forest is just a piece of expendable nature. If you kill it, I'll just find another way to attack you. Just one more day and I'll be at my full strength. And then," its

gaze turned to me, sending chills down my spine, "I'll begin my attacks on your kingdoms. Starting with the Light Kingdom!"

In hindsight, I should have stayed quiet. I knew it was just goading me on but anger clouded my judgement. "You're not going to touch my kingdom!" I yelled a familiar warmth filling my body. A spear of light formed in my hand, crackling with energy. I launched it towards him without a second thought.

CR–RACK!

Apophis shrieked as the wood hissed. There was a hole right through his left eye. He recoiled and Germany quickly ordered for us to hurry out of the forest. "There's an exit up ahead thanks to Ukraine," he told me as we ran. Singapore was dragged along by Japan and Italy, body limp.

"You seriously think you can escape me?" Apophis's voice was booming as the trees closed in on us. America was doing a good job of holding most of them back and I was able to shoot some of them down with my ability. My left arm pulsed and I gritted my teeth. Now wasn't the time for my body to hurt. Sending another bolt of light, I blocked another group of roots from grabbing us. Canada was muttering something under his breath, brows furrowed.

"Nada, I love you but don't waste your abilities now! This forest *isn't* normal, your powers can't work here!" America yelled to Canada who shot him an irate glare.

"It's still worth a shot!" he snapped, resuming his muttering.

My legs were burning with exhaustion but I carried on, seeing a faint light in the distance. *Only a bit–NO!* Massive roots shot from the ground, forming a thick barricade between the forest and exit. Apophis laughed as he reformed in front of us. His eye had repaired itself though it flickered weakly. America tried to start another flame but he was simply too weakened from his exertion. A root grabbed his arm and twisted it. He let out a scream, as Italy sliced at it–losing his dagger in the process. My body tensed as Canada's frantic muttering only increased in volume. Tears glistened in his eyes, sweat pouring from his forehead.

"Goddamnit Nada, if you'd *shut* up for one–"

"STOP!" Canada yelled, voice cracking. America took a step back as Canada continued, his emotions raw, "IF YOU CAN HEAR ME, RESIST APOPHIS! PLEASE!"

Apophis chuckled as tendrils snaked closer and closer towards our feet. A faint glow emitted from me which only slowed them as Ukraine and Japan sliced at the roots. "Tch, your ability won't work here Canada. The forest answers to *me*. Never to you. Just like your subjects," it taunted.

Canada's head snapped up as he rasped, "You–you don't speak for them! The forest belongs to *no* one!"

In an instant, the forest stilled as the tendrils receded back into the ground. The purple light in Apophis's eyes flickered, "How...?" Canada coughed hard, red staining his lips. America's eyes widened in alarm but Canada laughed softly. A breeze as the trees creaked softly, a gentle ghostly hum filling the air. Germany had one hand over his chest, eyes narrowed as he clenched his fists.

The humming only increased in volume as voices filled the air. Several spectral figures appeared. They had long white hair, dressed in tattered robes. Germany stepped forward, voice strained, "Stay back. They're banshees."

Canada sagged to his knees, shaking his head. "Forest spirits," his voice was almost gone and his complexion wasn't looking any better. The ghostly figures wrapped around Apophis and it roared, purple energy crackling.

"We will hold him for as long as we can. Run children. Save our kingdom." the spirits ordered us, voices haunting.

Everyone stood in shock as the forest shook. Apophis screamed and their figures flickered. *"Go! Don't waste Canada's sacrifice,"* they urged. Germany was the first to return to his senses as he looked down.

"Everyone gather!" he ordered, grabbing Ukraine and America. I

huddled close, grabbing Canada who had passed out (miraculously on his knees still). Italy, Japan and Singapore were next to me and Germany muttered something under his breath. An oval item in his hands glowed as the spirits chanted in an ancient tongue. Gold wrapped around us and a sense of safety settled within me. Light blinded me and the last thing I heard was Apophis's screams before all turned to white.

*

When I came to, I was lying on something soft. My arm was aching like I'd been made to hold it up for several hours. In the weak moonlight, I noticed a few prone figures laying around me. Canada was next to me, breathing laboured. The sound of flowing water filled my ears. *Where are we?*

"Poland!" Germany's face filled my vision.

A thin strip of moonlight illuminated his grimy face. The wound he had obtained from Moscow was bleeding again. My hand reached out as I murmured, "You're wound...bleeding." Germany looked surprised for a second before irritation crossed his features. Poking me, he brushed it off.

"I'll live. How're you? Canada and Singapore are still out like a light," he changed the topic, helping me up, "The others are up and are along the river."

I groaned at the movement, feeling the throbbing in my arm increase in intensity. "Arm...hurts," I coughed. Germany unscrewed a bottle of water and coaxed me to drink it slowly. The cool water helped soothe my throat and I felt slightly better.

"I would imagine it does. You...you did something amazing early Pol. Y'know? The light shooting out of your hands...I didn't even know you could do that," Germany's eyes were wide with wonder, "Don't you guys need light to activate your abilities?"

I flexed my fingers, wincing at the slight ache. "I didn't know either. This...it's never happened before. It defies what we've been taught," I admitted after a while. Germany tilted his head, murmuring

something under his breath.

"What do you mean 'not the only one'?" I asked, startling him.

Germany adjusted his glasses and shook his head. "It's nothing. I mean– What I mean is like...Canada he did something far beyond what I know his ability is capable of," he had a shifty look in his eyes. I raised an eyebrow, unconvinced. He refused to look at me, suddenly finding Canada's sleeping form extremely interesting. Or maybe it was the ground. *Fine, if you want to play like this*. Groaning, I used my good arm to push myself up. Yet the movement only caused another stab of pain up my injured limb. Germany quickly steadied me, helping me to my feet.

"Careful. I don't think you've broken anything. It's probably just overused but still," he warned.

"Yes doctor," I answered sarcastically. Germany's lips quirked before settling into a thin line.

Our moment was interrupted by a weak cough. It was Canada, his eyelids fluttering open. Germany immediately called for America and bent down to check on him. "Canada, can you hear me?" Germany asked, one hand on his shoulder.

Canada's eyes shot open and he jerked upright as a coughing fit gripped him, forcing him to bend over. I stood rooted to the ground, terrified. America arrived just as his brother coughed up a huge chunk of blood. It splattered onto the dirt as Canada swayed, head lolling to the side. If not for Germany's grip, he would have fallen face first.

"Shit! Nada, Nada, are you okay?" America crouched, eyes wide with worry. I noticed his left arm was in a makeshift splint and my heart sank.

"America, help me onto the ground," there was no hiding the concern in Germany's voice.

They laid him onto the ground and he coughed again, blood dripping from his lips. His face was far too pale, breathing shallow.

America held Canada's hand, bringing it to his lips, furrowing his brows. "This is the second time he's puked already," America murmured, uncharacteristically solemn. His voice sounded close to tears.

"He'll need to rest," Germany started, rising to his feet, "This overuse...it's worse than normal."

"It's my fault," America murmured, resting his head against Canada's chest, "He sacrificed...I should have supported him more!" He looked younger, eyes filled with sorrow.

"Ame, it isn't your fault. Canada chose to make the sacrifice. We all have," I rasped. He shook his head, turning away from me. Irrational anger filled me as I grabbed him by his shoulder, forcing him to face me. I felt the pain in my arm but pushed past it as I growled, "Listen to me. Canada didn't bring himself into this state for you to mope. There will be time for your regrets later. Now, we need to focus."

He didn't respond, only clutching to his brother tightly. I was about to say something until Germany placed a hand on my shoulder. I scowled at him. *You're seriously going to leave America like this?* He gave me a knowing look as he said in a low voice, "Enough. He needs this."

I opened my mouth to argue but was interrupted by a soft groan followed by a raspy voice, "What..."

Immediately, Germany's focus shifted and he knelt back down to help Singapore sit up. "Easy, easy," he said, motioning for me to call the others over. I limped off towards the river and saw Italy, Japan and Ukraine sitting by the riverbank, chatting. They looked worse for wear but fortunately uninjured.

"Guys, Singa's awake," I called out to them.

Japan's eyes widened and she shot to her feet, rushing past me. Italy and Ukraine got up slowly, and followed me. We walked back, shooting each other's looks. Italy in particular was extremely expressive, looking at Japan's receding frame and us. I shrugged,

wincing at the pain in my arm.

"Do you want me to create a sling?" Italy asked. I shook my head, gritting my teeth. He sighed and continued forward.

By the time we reached the clearing, Japan was hovering around Singapore and Germany nervously. Singapore was leaning heavily against Germany, breathing heavily. Japan looked up at us and shook her head sadly. *Not good.*

Germany looked at us, murmuring, "He's got a fever. A bad one. I...I think...I think it's from shock?"

I bent down, gently placing one hand on Singapore's forehead. It was hot to the touch. "Oh yea, he's burning up alright," I answered grimly before looking at Japan, "Do you have a spell that can help him?"

She jolted, looking at us with glassy eyes. Shaking her head to regain her bearings, she replied tonelessly, "I do. But I'm too weakened to do it right now. The best I can do is a minor cooling spell. It'll...it'll bring down his fever I guess." Her voice was shaky and she was playing with her fingers again.

"That'll have to do," Germany gruffly said, shifting to allow Japan to work her ability, "Poland, take care of Canada. Ukraine, uh...herbs, flowers, whatever you can summon please. Italy...Italy you keep America...sane? Yea sane."

We nodded and I saw Ukraine muttering under her breath as a soft pink glow lit the ground surrounding her. I glanced over to Canada whose breathing was shallow. "Can you do anything?" Italy asked, one hand on America's back. I brushed back some of Canada's hair, biting my lip. His skin was cold and clammy, a stark contrast to Singapore's heated body.

"I...I don't know. My abilities are mostly combative. I can *try* but..." I trailed off, letting one hand rest over his chest. Shutting my eyes, I tried to channel whatever power had coursed through my veins during the fight. *C'mon. C'mon.* Just when I was about to give up, a familiar warmth passed through me. I heard a soft gasp from

Canada as his veins began to glow. It wasn't like with Apophis where the power was *hot* and fiery. This was more akin to the sun's warmth. America looked up, awe in his eyes.

The glow began to dim but I refused to give up so easily. There was a visible change in Canada's complexion and breathing. My hand was burning but I willed myself to push through. *Please...just a bit more...*

A hand gripped my wrist, yanking it away. The glow in Canada's veins began to dim as I yelled, "No!"

"Poland, enough," Germany ordered, grip tightening, "He's stable."

"No! Just a bit–"

"Poland, listen to Germany. Look! Canada's breathing's stable and we don't know how much of your abilities can be used," Italy interjected. I took a better look, noting that compared to a couple moments ago, Canada's complexion was almost back to normal. His cheeks were rosier and his lips were no longer a dull grey. America was hugging Canada, tears streaking his face. Relief flooded through me and I collapsed into Italy and Germany's arms.

"It's okay...it's okay," Germany reassured me, "Don't use your abilities anymore okay? You've used too much already."

I nodded, feeling a wave of exhaustion crash upon me. My eyelids grew heavy and I could barely catch the whispered exchange between Germany and Italy. A figure carried me and I felt myself being placed against a tree. "We're moving when dawn comes. Just focus on resting now. You've done well," Germany's low voice lulled me deeper and I murmured my acknowledgment. Someone patted me as I fell into a deep slumber.

Translations: Merda merda merda-- Shit, shit, shit

A/N:

[image]

[image]

creeps out of hobbit hole, hands raised

checks the last update--5 May 2025

Eli: Shit...errrmmmmmm-

Hai gang...it's been wayyyy too long and I'm so sorry for the long wait :(Life has been very very busy and I've been pushing back the publishing date a lot. (On the second point, that is a terrible thing of me to do because I fuelled my own procrastination but erm...)

I did mention this on my board like...two announcements (or like one annoucment ago, guys I legit can't math anymore errrrrr I'm growing stupid lmfao) ago that I've not been doing too well in the mental department. Normally I do try to stay away from talking about personal life but it does affect this part of my "digital" life so yea... I'm doing fine right now mostly so cheers to that :D

Imma just try and continue writing and post as soon as I can for BbD but I legit cannot promise y'all anymore posting schedule. I also gotta admit, I'm slowly losing interest in this because I think I lost the plot...when I made Poland sick. Yea-

[image]

My actual thought process during the writing of this chapter-

If I do a re-write, I swear this story either will shrink by half or it will expand by another quarter- I CAN SEE THE PLOT HOLES AND IT'S KILLING ME- If my writing skills look like they are getting shittier, it's cause it is and cause I dropped the plot and when I picked it up, it mutated so...I REALLY SHOULD STICK TO MY PLOTS! :D Lesson learnt :3

[image]

(This legit just represents my writing life rn. They're all CH books but rn, my focus for some reason is on Remembrance so I think I shot myself in the foot--)

Wow, I've been yapping so much, anyways, I'll show some more shit in my art book but here's some doodles of eyes!

[image]

Can y'all guess whose eyes these are? (I mis-coloured two of those in black so y'all lemme know what u think those characters are)

Finally, here's one last meme. Don't take it seriously. In fact, please disregard it! (This is more of me making a joke of how a classmate found out about this side hustle of mine and well...asked when was the next chapter. Y'all thank them cause they legit reminded me I have not fed you people in 2 months.)

[image]

Okay my dears, bye bye.

(Oh and one more note: IF ANYONE READING THIS IS INVOLVED IN WATTPAD DRAMA PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE NEVER DRAG ME INTO IT THANK YOU :) I swear I will migrate to Ao3 for good if I get anymore of this bs again. Okay bye bye fr.)

Count on me

[image]

I sighed in relief when Poland finally drifted off. At least now he could rest. Part of me felt terrible that he had to wake to such chaos. Having to use his powers while weakened was no easy feat. *That and the lack of light.* I stared at his sleeping form, noticing the slight warmth he was emitting. *Hopefully he doesn't get a fever.* I highly doubted Japan had it in her to summon another cooling spell. Not with the way she was using it on Singapore. I looked over, noticing the blue glow surrounding his figure. Japan was already shaking with exhaustion though she kept pressing on.

"Go stop her before she passes out," Italy tapped my shoulder, jerking his head towards her, "She listens to you more."

"But Pol-"

"I'll watch him. Go stop her," he repeated himself, gently resting Poland's head against his shoulder.

I wanted to protest but thought better of it. The last thing I needed was for our only possible healer to become unavailable. Ukraine's attempts at summoning seemed fruitless and she had given up, opting to sit next to Canada and America (he'd fallen asleep). After shooting one last glance at Poland, I hurried over to Japan.

Italy was right. She looked close to death's door, dark circles under her half-lidded eyes and the blue glow was flickering. She kept chanting something in her native tongue and I could see threads of silver coming from her wrist. My eyes widened and I yanked her hands away from Singapore's forehead.

"GERMANY!" she shrieked as the threads of silver severed, disappearing with a soft *hiss*. Singapore gasped before falling still. "I can still continue!" she protested despite her body sagging. I

steadied her, forcing her to lean against me. She squirmed, trying to return to Singapore's side. My grip tightened.

"Absolutely not! What were you thinking? Giving up your lifeforce for him? Are you an idiot?" I scolded in a quiet voice.

Japan's shoulders shook and for a moment I thought she was having a seizure until I felt my hands become wet. "You don't get it! I promised to save him! I can...he just needs a bit more. I can give it to him please Germany. Please, you don't understand!" she sobbed, half hysterical. Italy and Ukraine looked at me, concerned.

I gritted my teeth, hugging her tightly. "I do. But you can't continue like this," I murmured, "Don't give up your life just for him."

"I have to! It's the least I can do. Not after...not after what J.E...Father...di- Did. Please..." she continued to cry. I froze, grip loosening just a tiny bit. It was no secret that as the children of the Villainous Trio (one of *many* names our parents' alliance was called), we carried the heavy burden of our parents' past deeds. It was surprisingly easy, however, for me to forget that my friends carried equally heavy burdens as I did.

Italy may have gotten the better end of the stick, perhaps having been the one to stop the madness happening in his kingdom, but nonetheless, in the quiet moments, one could see the anguish he carried. He may have hid it well enough with his dramatics but it lingered like a ghost. Japan too. And in this moment, it showed. Her face was red with exertion, her body shaking like a leaf as her tears continued to wet my shirt.

"He says he forgives me. His whole family does and ASEAN treats me so nice but...but...I can see their eyes. I know they still...they still hate me! So if...if giving up my life...if it means something...I will do it. Please, just let me," she begged, snapping me out of my thoughts.

"You're fucking kidding me right?" I asked in a low voice and she flinched. Softening my tone, I muttered, "Japan...no matter what we– Our parents do...some things can never be erased. The hurt. The bloodshed. The way forward *isn't* to give up our lives but to

never forget."

Japan's breathing hitched and she grabbed my shirt tightly. I pulled her in, wrapping her in a hug as I murmured reassurances. It was only when I nearly lost my grip on her that I realised she had passed out. Lowering her to the ground carefully, I swept her hair back. Her shirt was slightly ripped at the sleeves and I could see the faint glow of silver in her veins. *Why Japan? What were you trying to prove?*

"It's the same with you isn't it?" Italy's voice jolted me out of my thoughts. I frowned, peering over at Poland. Italy waved a dismissive hand, "He's fine Germs. Don't be such a worry-wart."

"I'm not a–"

"Are too."

"Am not!"

Italy rolled his eyes, ruffling my hair much to my annoyance. However, his smirk soon faded as he knelt next to me. Examining Japan's arm, he tsked. "I've told her a million times to stop overusing her abilities but she never listens," he lamented.

"Why?" I blurted out, "Why does she think she needs to...why does she need to prove she cares?"

Italy hesitated before sighing, shoulders slumping. At that moment, he looked like he had aged an extra 20 years. Playing with the hem of his shirt, he started slowly, "Singapore's animosity towards her isn't unknown. Much less hidden. Dunno if you've noticed but he doesn't speak to her unless required."

"I thought it was the age gap."

Italy laughed softly but there was no real joy in his voice. "Ger, you might wanna start observing more of your surroundings. Singapore...he's courteous at the very least towards her. Other than that...he," he paused, "You get what I mean."

I bit my lip, looking over to Singapore who had a small smile on his

face. He'd curled up now, hugging his knees. "I'm just glad Singapore's okay now," I sighed, "Dunno how I'd explain to ASEAN if his son died."

Italy hummed, looking up at the moon. Judging by its position, dawn would soon break. I let out a yawn, hanging my head. Gods, I was tired. Italy glanced at me, shifting slightly. "Go sleep. I don't know how you're still conscious but you need the rest. God knows if that...*thing* comes after us again," he shivered.

I shook my head, stifling another yawn. He rolled his eyes, lightly punching me. "C'mon Germs, don't be stubborn. I'll keep watch," he reassured me, "I may act weak but don't forget what *I* did."

"Killing your father?" I blurted before clamping a hand over my mouth, "Shit- I'm sorry. I..."

"Didn't mean it. Yea I've heard that before Ger," Italy replied tiredly, looking at me in disappointment.

"No. I...what I mean...I," I stopped myself, taking a moment to recompose before saying, "I...I shouldn't have yelled that out back when we met with the group...I was angry and it slipped out... But! It's not an excuse. It was out of hand and..."

Italy raised a hand to silence me before sighing. "I've already forgiven you. I- We were inside the Winter Kingdom's cell... Canada and I talked it out and I've figured that it's pointless for the two of us to remain hostile. We're friends aren't we?"

"Friends?" I raised an eyebrow.

"Yea. Friends. And that means sometimes we fuck shit up but in this situation– that situation really... What I mean is that we were both angry. And I was out of line. So...I also owe you an apology. So...are we even now?"

Italy looked at me, his expression not quite angry yet nor happy. *Sincere.* I let out a quiet sigh and relaxed, "Yea. We're even."

Italy grinned, lightly punching my shoulder, "Good. Cause I don't know who else would endure my yapping. Now sleep. I'll wake you

up soon."

I nodded, lying on the ground and shut my eyes. There would be lots of talking to do once everyone recovered but for now, I would rest. Sleep washed over me and the last thing I heard was Italy's soft humming.

*

"GERMANY!" Singapore screamed as a tree root grabbed him by the ankle. My eyes widened as I whipped my head around. ***What the hell? I thought we escaped?*** *Singapore yelled for me again and I saw Japan try to slice at the root only for a tree branch to pierce her arm. She was thrown into the darkness and I heard a terrible crunch.*

"GERMS!" Italy's voice was next and I saw him limping, leg swelling. Canada was supporting him as he chanted but to no avail. America and Poland were back to back, trying to fend off more attacks as Ukraine fought against the branches. I ran towards Singapore, using my ability to fend off the branches and roots but they kept coming. One tripped me and I saw a branch curled around Singapore's neck, cutting off his air supply. ***NO!*** *I struggled to stand but a branch pinned me down. His legs kicked feebly until a crunch was heard. They stopped, hanging limply. I let out a hoarse scream, sending a bolt of shadows only for it to be swatted into Canada and Italy who collapsed.*

"No, no, no, no, no!" I was panicking now, and the others looked at me in fear.

"Germany..." America forced the two others behind them, lighting up his hands in a fiery flame.

They all took a step back and I saw Poland's features harden. "I knew it...we can't trust you," he answered darkly, "Your act...it was too good to be true.

"Poland...no! I...promise...I can...Canada and Italy it...the– I can fix this! I swear!" I begged, nearing them. They didn't respond and my expression crumbled. "Guys...plea–"

The forest dissolved into smoke and I fell into an abyss before finally

*landing **hard on** the ground. It was rough, scraping against my skin. Groaning, I sat up, horrified to see mirrors lining the wall. The room was dark–almost like the palace's dungeon. My reflection stared back at me, terrified, his hair in complete disarray, cloak torn to shreds. My eyes were wild, animalistic almost. But when I blinked, that person disappeared only to be replaced with my own face again.*

*Except it wasn't me. The features were there but the eyes were all wrong. Instead of violet, they were silver and held an ancient, knowing gaze. In those eyes I saw **him** . My father. The boy in the mirror grinned, teeth sharp and glinting.*

"My my my, quite the show you put on there isn't it?" he paced around, "I'm quite impressed to be honest."

*My blood ran cold at the sound of his voice. **Apophis. But…how?** The boy (He wasn't me. Never. My confidence faltered nonetheless.) laughed cruelly, the sound echoing in the chamber. My breathing hitched as my heartbeat increased. Swallowing, I glared, "What do you want, Apophis?"*

He vanished and the next thing I knew, the mirrors showed all my friends in various injured states. Apophis...the boy...whatever the hell this entity was, stood next to me, one hand wrapped around my neck, the other on my shoulder. His head was on my free shoulder as he whispered, "You failed them. You failed to protect them."

I shook my head but he stopped me, tightening his grip. His voice slithered into my ears, poisoning my thoughts. "They'll leave you. Singapore, Poland, Japan, Italy...your allies. And poor poor Germany will be all alone."

Alone.
Alone.
Alone.

*The word echoed in my mind, as my breathing quickened. "But not me. I'm a patient creature, Germany. I've resided in your dingy swamp for **years** and been suppressed for more than a millenia. So join me. We can rebuild Pangea. Together."*

"No...no...no..." I sank to my knees, unable to support myself any further. My stomach was twisting in all the wrong ways and I felt nauseous.

*"Don't you remember? When you killed that **useless** leader? The way they all were scared of you. In fact...I distinctly remember a certain boy of yours looking absolutely terrified of you. What's his name? Singapore isn't it? How long until you truly scare him away hmmmm?" Apophis looked at me, hands forcing me to stare into those terrible silver eyes, "How long more until they find out you're just like your father?"*

"I'm nothing like him!" I spat, finally snapping out of my trance, shoving Apophis away. He tutted as two shadows forced me to face him again.

"But you could...think about the power you'd wield. You could make them respect your kingdom. No longer the laughing stock of Pangea," he whispered, "Isn't that what you wished for?"

My resolve wavered and I hated how shaky my protests sounded. It was true. But it was a stupid little truth from my younger–

"Younglings speak the truth, don't you know? Face it Germany. You are set to become your father. And I can help you. So let me!" Apophis pleaded, "If not for me...but for your younger self."

*The mirrors' images shifted again and I saw my younger self, his eyes shining with innocence. And next to him...Father. He had a warm smile, holding me. At that moment, we looked normal. **He** looked normal. "Don't you want to make him proud?" Apophis continued as I stared up at the images. My lower lip trembled.*

"It's not real...Father wa– Was a tyrant and he killed so many people. I'm not like him and I'll never be," I glared at Apophis, forcing myself to stand.

He glared right back, smile vanishing in an instant. "Prove it then. When the moment comes–when everyone you love and know abandons you– you Germany will be sorry," he spat as the world spun. He vanished into the mirrors as they shattered one by one. The ground broke once more as I fell down into darkness.

*

I woke up with a strangled scream and shot up right, eyes wide but unable to see anything clearly. A hand tried to push me back down but in my panic, I shoved it away. My heart was pounding too fast and my head was screaming and I could hear...*Poor poor Germany will be all alone.*

"Germany! It's me, Italy!" I heard a frantic voice yell, "You're safe!"

My vision began to clear up a little as Italy's face came into focus. Behind him stood Singapore, face drawn but he was awake nevertheless. *Alive.* A choked laugh-sob came out as I curled in on myself. "Oh my god...shit thank god...you guys are alive. Oh my...thank god," I said between tears. Singapore and Italy looked at each other before Singapore wrapped his arms around me.

"We're fine Ger. It's safe here isn't it?" he whispered. I hung onto him like he was a lifeline, body shaking as I shook my head.

"You...Apophis...he...he's here- I mean like- He's- I saw him in my...my dreams and...and..." I couldn't continue, dissolving into hiccuping sobs. Apophis's voice slithered within my mind and I swore I could still hear him. *You're a danger to every–*

"No you're not. You're stronger than this," West interjected. She sounded tired–sad even–though her voice still held strong. *I'm not. I'm not strong enough. Apophis invaded my safe space and he's going to–*

"Germany. You resisted him. That's more than enough proof of your mental strength," West's voice was firm as she continued, "Stop saying you're not strong enough. Apophis is no natural creature. The fact you've woken up without being corrupted...that's strength."

I whimpered, curling in on myself, the warmth Singapore providing suddenly feeling all too dangerous. If I...what if I harmed him? Apophis's soul–part of it at least–was within me and it was rising. Even now I could feel the ever so slight tug and whisper of East's voice. My heart ached. Poor East...what happened to him?

"Ger?" another familiar voice broke through the fog and a pair of

emerald green eyes peered at me. *Poland.* I let out a yelp, scrambling away. A flash of hurt appeared on his face before it melted back into concern. "I'm not gonna hurt you Ger. It's me, Poland," he reached out, fingers brushing my shoulder.

"Stay away from me! I'll hurt you!" he recoiled at my outburst, eyes wide.

"Wha...Germany what the heck are you tal- You won't hurt me!" Poland reassured me.

"Apophis...he...no- He's right. I'm...I'm dangerous," the words felt like they were beginning to clog my throat and I could barely choke them out. *Danger. Danger. Danger.* By now, everyone was crowding around us and it was starting to terrify me. *I'm gonna hurt them. Apophis is right- They'll see who I truly am. Alone. Alone. Alone. Alon-*

"Germany, calm down. Breath with me 'kay?" Singapore bent down, clearing the area. I hiccuped, feeling tears stream down my face. *He's right. I'm a monster. He's right.* "Oi, whatever's going on in your head, it's not true 'kay? You're *not* dangerous and you're *not* alone," Singapore shook me a couple times.

"I feel him Singapore...he came to me...said...he's taking over I swear I can feel it!" I cried. I was vaguely aware of the murmurs rushing through the others but was in too deep in my panic to fully register it. (That and the implication of my words.)

"No no, that's not true," Singapore reassured me, "You're still with us. You're Germany. Not Apophis's puppet. Germany." *For now,* East (or was it Apophis? Who was who even?) chuckled. I shut my eyes tightly, willing him to shut up but it did nothing.

Trembling, I looked at Singapore and murmured, "What if I can't stop him?"

"We'll decide when we come to that. Which we won't," he promised me, rubbing circles on my back, "I won't let it happen."

I let out a shaky breath as the panic slowly relinquished its hold on me, chest loosening as the tears dried. Wiping away the last tears, I

stared up at the others. They looked worse for wear but importantly was that they were alive. Their eyes held a mix of caution, concern and care, no one daring to make the move. I let out a wobbly smile as I rasped, "I'm...I'm good now."

Poland shot me a look–*We need to have a talk*–but I ignored it in favour of staring into the distance. A breeze rustled the leaves and a bird chirped as it flew into the sky. America coughed, one hand gripping his arm. "Alright guys, as much as this whole comforting Germany fest is cute and all, Apophis is still out there. The more time we spend, the more territory he's going to take over," he looked at me, "Germany, what's next?"

For a moment, the question hung in the air. Apophis's voice was still ringing in my ears but it was slightly more muted now. *Focus Germany*, West's voice jolted me from my sinking thoughts, *Remember, your citizens count on you.*

"We'll...we'll walk along the river. It'll take us to the nearby town and we can start reclaiming land from there," I replied, forcing confidence into my voice. America tilted his head, shooting a barely perceptible smile.

"Alright, lead the way then."

A/N: The fact I'm posting this on Singapore's National Day (Yes, the title is completely supposed to "reference" the song) does not go unnoticed by me. I can't believe Singapore's 60 already! Happy National Day to all fellow Singaporeans <3!

My nationality got leaked a while back but let's be real, I think I was sometimes a little to obvious haha~ That was not funny...but yea, I've been wanting to reveal for a while already soooo getting to do this on my own terms is much better. (Ngl, I swear Singaporeans we all have this same texting style almost- Cause my friends and I were yapping a while back that you can also tell when a netizen is Singaporean just by the way they text...Idk, seems partially true hahahaha)

Hopefully y'all enjoyed this chapter, it's been one that I've been

pretty happy to make and marks...idk...6-8 chapters left before we finish this? If I suddenly add more in than it might be over? (My math is terrible)

Ngl, the part in Germany's nightmare sequence was partially based of the K-pop demon hunters scene where (SPOILERS!) Rumi gets into an argument with Mira and Zoey. If I had to make that an AU based on BbD, Rumi is def Germany (in a sense) or Italy (since he acts all innocent), Mira is probably Singapore or Japan or even Poland, Zoey is America (lmao) or Italy. Ukraine and Canada...Canada's Bobby Ig...Ukraine...honestly I dunno, cause they don't-- Oh Rumi might fit her...maybe?

Anyways, here's the drawings I made for Singapore' birthday :)

[image]

[image]

Hehehehe, it's another AU of mine, more to be revealed in the Artbook! It's not gonna be a written one, maybe drawing ish? There's like minimal plot here. Singapore looks not to bad with blue eyes ngl. Also base is from Pinterest.

Alright, bye bye!!! Happy National Day once again to all Singaporeans.

Trust

[image]

"What's up with Germany?" I asked Italy as we trailed behind him. He was talking to Singapore though I noticed he'd become more reserved than usual. Italy shot me a look as if saying, *Why do you care?*

Because we're in his kingdom and I would not like to die here, I widened my eyes, sticking my head out a little bit as I looked in Germany's direction. Italy rolled his eyes and clicked his tongue. *Typical. One could say you're in love with him.* He narrowed his eyes at me, *You're not **are** you?*

"OW!" Everyone whipped their heads around and I noticed Germany's tense state as he looked about warily, hand reaching towards the dagger Ukraine had given him. Meanwhile, Italy was rubbing the back of his head, glaring at me. "Nothing's wrong, I just whacked Italy a bit too hard on the head," I explained.

Almost like magic, tension exited everybody's body except for Germany. He had a disgruntled expression on his face as he growled, "Don't do that again. The last thing I need is a false alarm." I forced out a smile as I apologised even as my heart sank. Something was up with Germany and it was more than just normal wariness.

As if hearing my thoughts, Italy sighed. "Don't play around anymore. Ger's already on edge, the last thing we need is for him to become doubly paranoid of everyone," he lectured me as we continued to walk along. The sound of the river water flowing did nothing to soothe my soul and I was beginning to regret not wearing a sling. With each step, my arm throbbed and pulsed with pain.

"Then tell me. What happened to him?" I asked again as I grabbed my arm to stabilise it. I let out a hiss drawing Ukraine's attention

from her conversation with America. Canada was sitting on America's back, head resting on America's shoulder, eyes half lidded. He was still too weak to walk so America had taken it upon himself to carry his twin despite Canada protests. Japan was helped by Ukraine, face too pale to be considered healthy. She had refused to be carried, practically hissing when Germany suggested it.

"Poland, are you okay?" Ukraine asked me, furrowing her brows. I waved my non-injured arm in response before turning to look at Italy who was staring dead straight ahead.

"Come on Italy, just tell me already!" I begged, "I know what I heard. He said something along the lines of...Apophis is taking over him! What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

Italy remained stubbornly silent, pace quickening. "What are you hiding from me?!" I hissed, reaching out to grab his shoulder.

He shrugged me off, before shooting me a glare. "I'm not *hiding* anything alright? Just drop it. If you want to know why don't you ask Germany himself?" he had a sharp mocking edge to his tone and I felt something stir in me.

"Maybe I will," I shot back, stalking forward. I heard Italy sigh before melding into the conversation between Ukraine and America. Coughing lightly, I called out to Germany who glanced at me, body tensing before he dropped his shoulders.

"What do you want?" he asked in a hard tone before softening it, "Is your arm okay?"

I shrugged, hiding a grimace as I asked, "What happened back there. In the clearing. What is it about Apophis?"

Germany remained silent, staring dead straight ahead. Singapore looked at me, shaking his head. *Don't.* Still I pressed forward as I pestered Germany with more questions, "Why are you saying he'll take over you? What do you mean you'll be his puppet? Why do you say you'll hurt me?" In the back of my mind, I vaguely felt a sense of deja vu. *The last time I'd pushed him I got injured.* The memory felt like a lifetime ago. Looking back, everything felt simpler then. I

hated Germany and that was that. *But now?* Things had changed. Too much.

Germany continued forward, jaw tense as he continued to ignore me. I walked faster. "Come on, just tell me please?" I begged, pulling out puppy eyes.

"No," his voice was curt.

"Please?"

"No."

Irritation gnawed at me as I pressed on, "Please Germany. I have a right to know. You claim you'll harm me and I need to know–"

He stopped, turning to face me. "So you don't trust me anymore," there was an iciness to his voice as he turned to glare at me. I took a reflexive step back.

"No! I don't mean...*you're* the one not trusting me!" I yelled in a fit of irritation. Everyone froze. The others stared at us and I felt shame crawl up my spine. Germany's gaze softened for a split second–revealing fear in his eyes–before it hardened into a sharp ugly scowl. He stalked forward, barking at us to hurry up.

I tried to chase after him only for Singapore to hold me back. I snarled but he only rolled his eyes as he held onto my shirt's tattered sleeve. My arm throbbed and I grimaced as he let go. "Your arm okay?" he eyed it, lips downturned as he furrowed his eyebrows.

"I'm...I'm fine."

"Don't seem like it."

"I said I'm fine goddamnit," I muttered as he raised his hands in mock surrender.

"No need to get grouchy with me. It's not me you're upset with even," he looked at Germany who was walking quickly, footsteps small yet efficient.

Walking with purpose, a sudden memory of how Papa used to describe TR's walk flitted through my mind. An involuntary shudder ran through my body. Watching Germany with a wary gaze, I muttered bitterly, "It's not fair. After *all* we've been through you'd think he'd gain *some* trust in me. Now? He doesn't even want to tell me what happened despite it concerning me. *Me*!" I kicked the dirt, hissing in pain as my arm throbbed, "I'm a stakeholder for goodness sake!"

Singapore looked at me with a strange expression as he murmured, "Maybe it's not *you* he doesn't trust. Maybe it's himself."

I looked at him, cocking my head in confusion. Singapore shrugged non-committedly as he continued, "I don't know for sure of course. But I'm guessing when he was resting earlier, he must have had a nightmare or something. About Apophis maybe. He's under a lot of stress now Poland."

"'Under stress' is an understatement. *All* of us are stressed. What I don't get is why he's *hellbent* on keeping things to himself even though it's clearly eating him up inside," I grumbled even as part of me had to grudgingly agree with Singapore's statement. If anything, over the course of the last couple months, I'd come to slowly notice many things about Germany. Unfortunately one of those things was his tendency to keep the ones *involved* in whatever problem in the dark. *Toxic trait much?*

Singapore merely hummed as he looked at me sympathetically. "Just try to understand. I won't speak for Germany but I can understand where he's coming from. He's carrying a *much* heavier burden than you think," his ominous words hung between us and I desperately wanted to know more. Yet, he remained tight-lipped.

Walking in silence, I mulled over his words. *What heavier burden? Isn't it the same as all of us?* I'd slowly fell back into my friend group's slower pace as they murmured amongst each other. Canada had fallen asleep while a half-asleep Japan was currently being carried on Italy's back while Ukraine assisted him from falling onto the ground. Singapore was speaking with Germany and I could only hear snatches of the conversation.

"...tell them."

A grunt and then a sigh from Germany. "...scare...off."

"Can't or won't? You...this...Germany," Singapore's muffled voice carried the first trace of exasperation.

Scare off? A terrible curling was beginning to make itself known in my gut and I felt the tendrils of nausea claw up my throat. The river's bubbling should have calmed me down but yet, it only served as an annoying muffler for the duo's conversation.

"...can't hide it!" Singapore argued, his hands waving about in annoyance.

"...risk...change...chance."

"Right so you...things better?"

Germany made no move to respond. Or maybe he did since Singapore's shoulders slumped as he let out a loud sigh. "...know what...doing, Ger," he said.

"I do," his voice was resolute and he turned to look back at me, eyes narrowed. He knew. My stomach dropped even further and I had to physically clamp a hand over my mouth as I felt vomit rise. Singapore looked back, eyes widening only ever so slightly as he parted his lips in a silent, 'oh fuck'. Looking away, I stared at the ground, breathing shallow.

My steps became slower as I felt an impossibly heavy weight crush me. Everything was too much. Just what on earth was being hidden from me? Why did Germany insist on hiding the truth from me? *But not Singapore.* Bitterness welled within me. It was stupid, when I thought about it, to expect him to tell me the truth when we only started to become friends not long ago. *But he didn't know Singapore that well either.*

Yea, but at least Singapore didn't push him away and make clear his hatred to Germany, a small voice at the back of my mind pointed out. I hated how true the statement was. As I continued to wallow in my misery, Italy sidled up next to me, still carrying Japan.

"Hey," he started.

"Hey you," I retorted though there was no heat behind them.

He rolled his eyes, carefully readjusting his grip on Japan. She stirred, murmuring softly in Japanese before settling again. "You're falling behind the group," he stated matter of factly. I blinked. Softening his gaze, he asked, "Are you okay? Is it about Germany?"

I shot him a look before huffing softly. He merely hummed back in response. We continue to trail behind the group in silence. Each step I took made my arm throb and I bit my lip trying to stifle my whimpers of pain. *I'm fine. You're fine. We're fine.* I repeated the words to myself but they held no conviction.

Our shoes crunched against the ground, intermingling with the bubbling river. Yet, the silence felt suffocating and I felt myself fidgeting with the edge of my cloak. "I just don't get Germany. Why does he bother hiding...I mean sure he doesn't trust himself but we're friends right? So, why can't he tell me what's going on? I'm not a child. I've gone through war, survived it and I'm on this mission to save my kingdom. Why can't he just trust me for once?" I blurted out.

Italy merely hummed as he looked at Germany. "He's different from us Poland," he began slowly, "You like to tell others what's wrong and you rarely hide things. Germany doesn't. In part it's just how he is but it's also because he's been forced to be alone for a long time. Trust to him is essentially a foreign concept."

"Right, and Singapore gets to hear about secrets *I* don't? It's not even about trust! If he's hiding something that jeopardises this entire thing, he *needs* to let us know. He's already saying things like losing control and hurting us! I'm not saying he will but what if? We need to pre–"

"You don't trust him."

I stopped, staring at Italy. "Of course I do!" I spluttered, blood rushing to my face.

Italy looked at me unamused as he adjusted Japan's arms. "Then you'd respect his decision to keep things to himself no?" he cocked his head as he walked forward. I hurriedly followed him as I tried to formulate an answer.

There was none.

Italy looked at me, a knowing glint in his usually bright eyes. They'd darkened over as he repeated, "You don't trust him. He's saying he'll hurt us but he's held back...whatever it is he's battling. Don't you think he's entitled to his secrets?"

"Until he can't," I argued back.

"Do you know something Poland?" Italy's voice was quiet, more serious than usual. I immediately shut up and nodded at him to continue. "I'm glad Singapore broke through Germany's walls. If anything, I think he's the first person Germany's allowed himself to be close to emotionally. You know me and Germany. We're not *that* close. Acquaintances would be the better word to describe our relationship but in any case. So...I mean he's already opened up to one person. Doesn't that count for something?"

Right. 'Count for something' is always the solution until he goes insane and kills everyone. I kicked at the dirt, grabbing my injured arm as pain lanced up the side of it. Italy shot me a look but didn't say anything and stared straight ahead. Not too far ahead, I could see some wooden structures in the distance.

"We're reaching the village soon! Be on guard. We don't know what's there," Germany spoke up, breaking the tense quiet. He shifted his hand to his hip as he continued, "Those carrying our injured, stand behind. America stop trying to pass Canada over to Ukraine, she can't carry his weight. Singapore stand behind me."

Slowly we shuffled into position and I took my place next to Germany who simply glanced at me and nodded. *You don't trust him*, Italy's words echoed in my mind. "I want to," I muttered, "I just don't know how." Germany looked at me, raising an eyebrow as he ordered me to focus.

The wooden structures grew bigger as we approached yet there was no one in sight. The sky was still in its usual grey colour though it was far darker than I recalled. Germany's expression tightened as he flicked his hand outwards, forcing the shadows into a black sword. His hand trembled as he looked around.

"*JEMAND ZU HAUSE?*!" he yelled.

Nothing. Not even the rustling of leaves as a slight breeze swept through the village. Germany's eyes widened as he drew his sword into a defensive position. "*HALLO*?" he tried again, "*Das ist der Prinz, wir kommen in Frieden!"*

"Germa–"

Creakkkkkkk~ In an instant, we whirled on our feet as Germany hurried forward, forcing Italy and America backwards. He called out again, grip tightening. The door to a dilapidated house creaked again and we inched closer as he carefully reached out to open it. I drew out my own dagger, body tense. *CRACK!* Germany threw the door open and it snapped off its hinges and a loud sob was heard.

"*KOMMEN SIE NICHT NÄHER!*" a woman's voice yelled out. From the shadows, she emerged, holding a small knife in her hand. Her hair was greying and she had wrinkles on her face. She had a fearful expression on her face as she stared at Germany in horror.

"*Frau, wir kommen in Frieden,"* Germany allowed his shadow sword to disappear with a soft hiss and motioned at us to keep our weapons.

"*NEIN! NEIN! Ich habe dich gesehen. Du bist in unser Dorf gestürmt und hast meinen Mann mitgenommen. Du hast das ganze Dorf massakriert!"* she yelled, holding her knife so tightly until her knuckles were turning white.

Germany's eyebrows raised as he replied to her, shaking his head. There was a slight tremor to his voice and I could see him fidgeting with the edge of his torn shirt. She snarled and jabbed the knife at us, forcing us back towards the entrance. "Germany, what the hell is going on?" I asked. He looked at me and despite the strong facade

he placed, I could see in his eyes that he was downright *terrified*.

"Germany, what is going on?" I asked again, voice firm.

He was shaking now, mouth opening and closing like a dying fish. His skin was draining of blood and he croaked, "She...she says I ruined this place."

I stared at him, feeling my world close in on me. *You don't trust him*. My heart clenched as my breathing became shallow. "What...what...what do you mean?" I struggled to get the words out. The woman looked at us, and in a heavily accented voice said, "Run! Run! Prince not good! He harm! Kill! Kill!"

When none of us made a move, she ran forward, blade ready to strike. In an instant, a shadowy barrier formed in front of us and she skidded to a stop, stumbling backwards. Germany's shoulders rose and fell as he whispered, "*Ich bin wirklich nicht hier, um dir wehzutun. Bitte vertrauen Sie mir.*"

She looked at us, shaking her head. Suddenly, there was a soft whimper and then a harsh hushing sound. She whipped her head around, breath hitching. I followed her gaze and noticed a mop of unruly blonde hair peek from a corner of the room. Then, a small boy–no more than 7–popped out from the corner and behind him trailed an older girl–12 years or so–her hair kept in a dark grey scarf.

"Mama?" the boy stared at our group, gripping his sister's (I presumed) hand tightly. She stared at us, eyes narrowed. The woman glanced at them shaking her head furiously as she yelled at them. I looked at Germany before deciding to take a step forward. Germany waved a hand to allow the shield to vanish as he glanced at me, nodding. The woman held her knife again until I raised my hands in surrender.

"We're not here to harm you. We're here to save your kingdom," I told her slowly, "Whatever happened...it wasn't Prince Germany's doing. It's Apophis and we're here to stop him."

"Apophis?" she repeated, slowly putting down her weapon. I nodded

grimly as I looked back at the group. "We're all trying to stop him," I continued.

She glared at us warily before finally setting down her weapon and grabbing her children to hold in her arms. "Then him? Explain!" she snapped, pointing to Germany, "He harm me! Me married, kids!" Germany shook his head frantically as he spat out in rapid fire German what I presumed was a whole explanation. She listened, eyes narrowed before finally asking, "Then...it was fake? The one who attack? Not Prince?"

I nodded furiously and waved towards the group, "They can confirm. We were with him the whole time. Right?"

Italy nodded furiously and Singapore followed suit. The woman sighed and immediately bowed down low. "*Bitte verzeihen Sie mir, Prinz Deutschland*," she apologised. Germany sighed, running a hand through his hair as he motioned for her to rise.

"*Es ist in Ordnung*. Now, please, tell us what happened," he asked desperately. The woman glanced at us and nodded. She motioned for us to sit as she hurried over to the front door, forcing the broken door back into place. I spotted America carefully setting Canada on a chair and a half-asleep Japan being set on another chair. The rest of us took seats on the floor and I groaned in relief as I sat down for the first time in hours. The lady took one of the other seats and her children sat on her lap.

"You want to know what happened?" she asked unsurely. I nodded. She bit her lip, whispering to her daughter who nodded.

"I can translate Mama!" she replied cheerfully. The woman nodded and exhaled once more, "*Gut*." A cautious hope settled upon our group as she began, "*Vor einer Woche*..."

Translations:

"*JEMAND ZU HAUSE?!*"-- Anyone home?

Das ist der Prinz, wir kommen in Frieden!-- This is the prince, we come in peace!

KOMMEN SIE NICHT NÄHER!-- DON'T COME ANY CLOSER!

Frau, wir kommen in Frieden-- Madam, we come in peace!

NEIN! NEIN! Ich habe dich gesehen. Du bist in unser Dorf gestürmt und hast meinen Mann mitgenommen. Du hast das ganze Dorf massakriert!-- NO! NO! I saw you. You stormed into our village and took my husband. You massacred the entire village!

Ich bin wirklich nicht hier, um dir wehzutun. Bitte vertrauen Sie mir.-- I'm really not here to hurt you. Please trust me.

Bitte verzeihen Sie mir, Prinz Deutschland,-- Please forgive me, Prince Germany.

Es ist in Ordnung.-- It's okay.

Vor einer Woche...-- A week ago...

A/N: I feel so ashamed at myself for not posting regularly hhahahahahahahahahaha~

But yea, life's been busy, exams, stu(dying), rushing assignments...yea all that boring stuff. So I didn't really have time or motivation to write in a sense? They're all over now so I'll be doing a bit more writing now! Yayyyyy!

I don't have too much to say but if you're reading this right now, do check out my new book: Remembrance which is a Singapore and Malaysia fanfic.

Alrighty, thank you for your support and for reading :D